

Khartoum delivers protest to Egypt

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese government has protested to Egyptian Ambassador Hassan Gad Al Haq for hiring a Sudanese national to carry out "hostile activities." Foreign Ministry official Hassan Abdul said Tuesday, Mr. Abdul denied, however, a report in the state-run daily Al Engaz Al Watani that Mr. Haq had been summoned to the ministry on Monday to receive a protest. A memorandum had been officially delivered to the ambassador, he said, protesting against "what we regard as a subversive act... especially by a sister country." The paper said that Mr. Haq told Sudanese authorities here that the Sudanese national, Mustafa Muflih Basha, had frequently visited his house and the embassy seeking assistance for medical treatment in Egypt. Basha was arrested by security officials and shown on national television confessing that he had been recruited by the Egyptian embassy to deliver threatening notes and packages of explosives to other foreign missions in exchange for large sums of money and a proposed job. Al Engaz Al Watani also claimed that Basha had been hired by the Egyptian embassy to tape record a scenario about Sudan's alleged support for international terrorism. Mr. Haq was reportedly told that his account of events was unconvincing. The state-run newspaper said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
 جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الرأي"

King Fahd holds talks with Velayati

RIYADH (AFP) — King Fahd held talks here Tuesday with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati on bilateral ties, Gulf issues and developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, an Iranian diplomat said. Tehran's Ambassador Mohammad Ali Hadi Najaf said the meeting, also attended by Saudi Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, was "positive," but gave no other details. A Saudi source said Mr. Velayati handed the king a message from Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani but its contents were not revealed. Mr. Velayati, who arrived in Riyadh earlier in the day, is on the first leg of a tour of Gulf Arab states, a week after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's mission to warn the region of the alleged security threat from Iran. Tehran Radio said Mr. Velayati left for Riyadh, to be followed during the week-long tour by visits to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman. Last week, Mr. Mubarak toured the same countries to raise the alarm over the alleged threat from non-Arab neighbour across the Gulf. Mr. Velayati, who last visited Saudi Arabia in June 1991, is expected to seek to reassure the Gulf Arabs and promote cooperation within the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Kuwaiti speaker urges strong Iran ties, page 2

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17,000 ships checked for Iraq cargo

BAHRAIN (AP) — Allied warships, enforcing a tight blockade against Iraq, have intercepted 17,000 ships since they began their mission in August 1990, a U.S. navy spokesman said Tuesday. The spokesman said the 17,000th ship was Peter 1, a container vessel registered in Vanuatu in the southwest Pacific northeast of Australia. It was stopped and boarded by a U.S. navy team in the Red Sea Monday. But no contraband cargo was found aboard and the team was satisfied with the manifest. The ship was allowed to sail on to Aden, he said. Of the total number of ships intercepted, 6,860 required boarding, the spokesman said. U.S. navy teams have carried out two-thirds of these missions. He said only 396 vessels so far have been diverted because of manifest irregularities.

'Iraq years from new missile ability'

MANAMA (AFP) — Iraq is years away from regaining the long-range missile capability it enjoyed before the Gulf war, a U.N. inspection team returning after two months in the Middle East country said Monday. The eight-strong team of ballistic experts returned to its U.N. base here Monday after a seven-week tour of Iraq, where its brief was to oversee the elimination of the country's ballistic weapons. Team leader Dennis Vincent, an American, told journalists that the mission — the 54th of its kind under U.N. auspices — was in general "positive" and that the Iraqis provided all the information the team had requested.

Arab allies discuss economic accord

DUBAI (R) — Finance ministers from six Gulf Arab states and Egypt and Syria began talks in Qatar Tuesday aimed at reviving a dormant two-year-old agreement on economic cooperation. The talks mark the first full meeting of finance ministers of the eight countries that signed the Damascus declaration, an economic and military agreement among Arab Gulf war allies, in March 1991 following the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Delegates contacted by Reuters said the ministers would discuss "implementing the economic subjects contained in the Damascus declaration." Egypt and Syria are hoping to ease unemployment at home through investment from a fund to be set up by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

Algerian bombing trial resumed

ALGIERS (AFP) — The trial of suspects in a bomb attack at Algiers airport that left nine dead last year resumed Tuesday at a special court here, but the hearing was boycotted by defence lawyers. In their absence, the three of the 55 defendants, who appeared before the court refused to answer questions from the senior judge, but he had their written testimony read out loud. Lawyers boycotted that trial. Even after an official announcement Monday on agreement between the heads of Algerian bar associations and the justice ministry on the "normal functioning of the special courts." The lawyers had been objecting to new legislation entitling court presidents to expel them from the court room or to suspend them for between three and six months.

Egypt bans media coverage of trial

CAIRO (AP) — The military attorney general banned further news coverage Tuesday on the trial of 14 Muslim militants accused of trying to assassinate a cabinet minister and attacking tourists. The restriction forbids local or foreign news organisations from reporting on the case. Major General Mohammad Abdullah imposed the ban after the 10 defendants in custody continued causing chaos during Monday's session despite earlier moves to silence them. On Saturday, Maj. Gen. Ahmad Abdullah, the military judge hearing the case, banished the defendants from court after they called him "butcher" and "murderer."

Israeli army kills 5 more Palestinians

Human rights group reports steep climb in number of children killed

JABALYA, occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — The Israeli army shot dead four Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip Tuesday and a fifth Palestinian died of wounds, Palestinian witnesses and hospitals said. Troops shot dead at least three Palestinians and wounded at least 35 in a single incident in Jabalya town in Gaza, witnesses said. The incident in Jabalya began when about 3,000 supporters of the banned Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas gathered for a memorial service for one of six Hamas members killed by Israeli forces on May 10 near the border with Egypt.

Army, paramilitary border police and plainclothes undercover units surrounded the orange grove where the service was being held and opened fire indiscriminately and without provocation, the witnesses said. The gunfire surprised the mourners, who did not know the security forces were present. Startled mourners fled in all directions between the trees while the shooting continued, witnesses said.

A Palestinian photographer at the memorial saw the army load two bodies carried on Palestinian flags into a military jeep. A third

body was taken by Palestinians, the witnesses said.

A Reuters correspondent who visited Shifa hospital in Gaza saw a 12-year-old boy identified as Atef Makousi who was shot in the neck and paralysed. The boy's brother Awni Makousi, 18, was one of the three killed.

The correspondent said the army prevented ambulance drivers, United Nations relief workers and Red Cross from going into the orchard to evacuate the casualties. He said soldiers were pushing the relief workers.

Hospitals said many of the wounded were shot in the upper body although army regulations instruct troops to fire at suspects' legs.

In a separate incident in Gaza on Tuesday, soldiers shot dead Taleb Ahmad Abu Ataya, 20, during a stone-throwing clash in Nuseirat refugee camp, officials at Shifa hospital said. Abu Ataya was described as mentally retarded.

Another youth, Kamal Aslan, 28, died Tuesday of gunshot wounds he suffered in a clash in Gaza Monday, Shifa said.

An Israeli human rights group criticised the army Tuesday for the death of an 18-month-old Palestinian boy by a soldier firing

at stone-throwing protesters.

The group Betsalem accused the soldier of opening fire with no warning and without his life being endangered as youths pelted soldiers with stones Sunday in the Gaza Strip.

Betsalem, or the Israel Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, also noted that 12 children died in army fire in December-May, more than in any six-month period in the Palestinian uprising.

The Hebrew daily Hadasot also criticised the army for the death Sunday of the Palestinian toddler, Fares Al Kord, in an editorial titled "Stop Killing Children."

Kord was shot as he stood near the entrance to a tyre repair shop in the Jabalya refugee camp, witnesses told Betsalem and Hadasot. His father had sought refuge in the shop when trouble erupted in the camp, they said.

The shop owner, Mohammad Mussa Mussa Al Barai, said the boy was "about one metre inside the shop, very close to me and his father. The officer was about 25-30 metres away, lowered his gun and shot immediately. If he had done it more slowly, we would have been deeper into the store."



Israeli police arrest a Palestinian during a demonstration against the seven-week-old Israeli military closure of the occupied Holy City (AFP photo)

Danes approve Maastricht

COPENHAGEN (Agencies) — Danes approved the European Community's (EC) ambitious plan for political and economic union Tuesday, according to projections based on the first partial returns. Rejection would likely have killed the plan.

Nearly four million Danish voters were asked to approve a treaty that would create a common European foreign policy, central bank and currency by 1999.

All 12 EC nations must approve the treaty for it to take effect. Aside from Denmark, Britain is the only EC country yet to ratify it. Passage in Britain seems likely — perhaps by the autumn — but is not assured because of opposition in parliament.

Danes voted to accept the treaty by 56.8 to 43.2 per cent, according to a computer forecast by Danish television after 15 per cent of the votes were counted.

If confirmed, the result would reverse the outcome of a referendum last June in which Danes rejected the treaty on political, economic and monetary union by 50.7-49.3 per cent. The forecast was considered to be reliable.

The forecast confirmed the trend in earlier computer projections which also gave the "Yes" share as around 57 per cent with 43 per cent for "No."

A telephone poll of 1,000 Danes showed 56 per cent favouring the treaty and 44 per cent opposed. The poll by Aim-

Nielsen had a three per cent margin of error.

A spokeswoman for a group opposed to the treaty conceded defeat.

"It's clearly a disappointment," said Drude Dahlerup, spokeswoman for the anti-treaty June movement. "It's a historical decision going the wrong way."

Danes narrowly rejected the treaty last June. But in December, the EC — answering concerns raised in last year's vote — allowed Denmark to opt out of the treaty's provisions calling for a common European currency, defence and citizenship.

The accord, negotiated in December 1991 in Maastricht, Holland, is aimed at giving the EC more clout in world affairs and increasing its economic competitiveness against the United States and Japan.

With the other EC nations moving ahead, Denmark might have been left on the sidelines if it had rejected the treaty.

Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen Monday made a last-minute plea for support, warning his countrymen that they "would never be forgiven" for scuttling the plan.

Europe, confronted by conflict and recession, needs to stand together to overcome the problems, he said. The unity treaty, he said, offers "a historical moment for a new start" in strengthening ties.

"I'm a believer in a union,"

Anne Krogh said as she waited at a crowded polling station in northern Copenhagen Tuesday with her five-year-old son, Marcus. "How can we stand alone when others unite?"

But others expressed concern the agreement would swallow up Denmark in a faceless bureaucracy and reduce many of the government's social benefits the government provides citizens.

Retiree Kurt Sorensen said he voted "No" because of fears his retirement assistance would be cut. "I'm making sure (Danes) don't get fooled by bureaucrats in Brussels," he said, referring to the EC headquarters in the Belgian capital.

Another opponent, Finn Hansen, an unemployed worker, said, "why should Denmark disappear in a union? Why should they force us to become Europeans when we are Danes and want to stay Danes?"

The Danish rejection last year was widely attributed to voters' reluctance to cede some national sovereignty to a fledgling EC federal government in Brussels. Anxious to ease those fears, EC leaders agreed to give Denmark the exemptions.

Preben Frederiksen, a Copenhagen salesman who voted against the treaty last year, said the "opt-outs" covered "what we were worried about."

The time, he said, "I'm going to vote 'Yes' — like many other Danes. I think."



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday meets with a delegation representing the Palestine Liberation Army (Petra photo)

King meets PLA team, reaffirms stands

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday Jordan seeks to establish a just, lasting and sustainable peace which future generations will accept and defend. He noted that the road to such a peace is difficult, long and arduous.

Speaking at a meeting with a delegation representing the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), which called at the Royal Court to congratulate the King on the 40th anniversary of the assumption of his constitutional powers, King Hussein said: "We have a duty towards the future generations — a duty to save the kinsmen in their occupied home-

land and to enable them to restore their rights on their national soil."

The King said Jordan "will continue to confirm all the challenges facing it, and will not despair."

"Challenges will strengthen our resolve to keep our heads high and not to bow to anybody except God," the King said.

He stressed the need for Arabs to advance and for Arab states to be "states of institutions capable of establishing strong and solid ties among the various Arab countries."

The King noted that Jordan has applied political pluralism and

was pursuing its democratisation process, observing human rights and respecting human dignity.

"It is our destiny as Jordanians and Palestinians alike to be one family and to face a lot of challenges. In fact it gives us honour to do so, despite the fact that our suffering comes more from friends than enemies," the King said.

King Hussein thanked the delegation for a PLA gift — a copy of the Holy Koran — "It is the dearest gift of all and that it is kept in the hearts and minds," King Hussein said.

He asked the commander of

the PLA to convey his greetings to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The PLA Commander voiced appreciation and gratitude for King Hussein's honourable stands towards the Palestinian question, and said people in the occupied Arab territories "will not forget the King's heroic and firm positions and his support for them."

He conveyed President Arafat's best wishes to the King.

The audience was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

Israeli officer killed, 2 wounded in S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — An Israeli soldier was killed and two others were wounded in a bomb attack claimed by Hizbollah near the border in southern Lebanon Tuesday, security sources said.

"A militiaman of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) and three civilians of Israel's self-imposed 'security zone' in the region were also wounded in heavy shelling that followed the attack, they said. The Israeli army confirmed the incident.

In Beirut the Islamic Resistance, military wing of the Hizbollah (Party of God), said later its guerrillas killed three Israeli soldiers when they attacked an Israeli patrol near the village of Ribane. Hizbollah sources said two guerrillas were seriously wounded in the fighting.

The Israeli army said the clash took place near the village of Sujid at 6.30 a.m. (0330 GMT) but military censors delayed reports of it for nearly 12 hours so that the army could first inform the families of the dead and wounded soldiers.

Sujid and Ribane are three kilometres apart and both about 16 kilometres north of the Israeli border.

They are close to the edge of the "security zone" Israel set up in 1985.

Lebanese security sources said the clash was with machine-guns and anti-tank rockets.

Israel and its local militia ally, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), retaliated for the attack by shelling villages in the area.

Guerrillas fired mortar shells at Aishiyeh village in the "security zone," an SLA stronghold, and wounded two SLA soldiers and two civilians. One of the civilians was a three-year-old critically wounded in the head, Israel said.

The guerrillas also fired four Katyusha rockets into the buffer enclave after Israeli gunners pounded the Iqlim Al Toufah area.

The sources said more than 150 heavy artillery shells crashed into Iqlim Al Toufah, north of Ribane and 40 kilometres south of Beirut, and the explosions could be heard in the port of Sidon. One resident said shells were at times falling at a rate of three every minute.

Arabs, Israel resume arms talks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Arabs and Israelis resumed talks Tuesday aimed at ridding the region of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The Middle East arms control talks, part of the Arab-Israeli peace talks, convened for their fourth session with some 40 countries and international organisations in attendance — including Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, North African states, European countries, Japan and U.N. organisations.

The idea of such broad participation is to provide Arabs and Israelis with assurances of support as they undertake the delicate issue of cutting their arsenals of mass destruction.

Syria and Lebanon are boycotting the talks pending progress in their direct peace talks with Israel, where they are demanding that the Israelis exchange the occupied Arab territories for

peace.

For the first time since the arms talks began in January 1992, a Palestinian delegation also was participating. Israel had argued until now that the Palestinians were not a country and therefore should not take part in arms control talks, but changed its mind as a concession to advance its one-on-one peace talks with the Palestinians.

The arms control talks are theoretically modelled on the experience of decades of U.S.-Soviet disarmament negotiations. The United States and Russia have been working closely with the sides to prepare the sessions and guide the talks.

U.S. persuasion is largely credited for a reduction in persistent Arab demands that arms control talks should start with Israel signing the international Non-Proliferation Treaty and opening up its nuclear facilities for inspection.

Israel is widely believed to have dozens of nuclear warheads, although it has never officially confirmed these reports.

Instead, the United States and Russia have steered the talks towards discussion of confidence-building measures among Arabs and Israelis — arguing that a reduction of arsenals could realistically occur only after peace is achieved between the sides.

In the meantime, Arabs and Israelis are discussing such measures as establishing a conflict prevention centre, exchanging information about manoeuvres and creating mechanisms for avoiding accidental clashes.

Israel is the only military power in the Middle East believed to have nuclear weapons. But Israel, Egypt and Syria are known to have chemical and biological weapons programmes.

Environment talks in Tokyo next week, page 10.

Ashrawi: No discussion on U.S. draft statement

By Wafa Amr
 Reuters

AMMAN — Palestinian peace negotiators will not discuss with U.S. officials a joint Israeli-Palestinian statement presented to them at the close of last week's peace talks, spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said Tuesday.

"We are not interested in a joint statement, because the joint statement is not in form or substance what we felt should be the way of addressing issues," Dr. Ashrawi told Reuters after meeting with Jordanian officials.

She said the peace negotiators should instead discuss separate declarations of principles by the Palestinians and Israel in order to formulate a joint declaration of principles bridging the gap between them.

Dr. Ashrawi said any documents that violated the terms of reference were unacceptable to the Palestinians. Israel and the Palestinians failed to reach agreement on the principles of interim Palestinian self-rule in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in the ninth round of peace talks which ended in Washington last week.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) rejected at the close of the talks a U.S.-drafted joint Israeli-Palestinian statement on autonomy, but it left the door open for further talks with U.S. officials on principles.

PLO officials in Amman said they were concerned that the U.S. document might form new terms of reference for the talks.

They said it exhibited Israeli bias and departed from the original terms of reference backed by the United States and Russia as sponsors of the peace process which brought Arabs and Israelis to the negotiating table in 1991. "The American proposal does not show U.S. intervention in terms of presenting a fair alternative or bringing the parties to comply with the terms of reference," Dr. Ashrawi said.

She said the original terms of reference were clear "and all documents and positions presented have to be within these terms of reference."

Dr. Ashrawi pointed out that there have been ongoing contacts with U.S. officials and actual talks on the declaration of principles will be taking place soon.

"We don't want just technical appearance of progress that could be misleading but rather addressing the real issues," she said. No firm date has been set for the next round of talks, and a meeting of Arab foreign ministers will be held in Amman to assess the last round of talks. The Palestine Central Council will also meet in Tunis to carry out a comprehensive review of the peace process, Dr. Ashrawi said.

Talking to journalists Sunday night, Dr. Ashrawi refused to use the word "failure" about the ninth session of the peace talks.

However, she said the session has been a "negative rest" of Israel's intentions and of the United States' readiness to keep its commitments.

S. Arabia continues crackdown

NICOSIA (AFP) — Saudi Arabian authorities have arrested 44 backers of a recently-formed Saudi human rights movement, the London-based Liberty group said Tuesday.

Liberty, an Islamic human rights organisation, said 44 more sympathisers of the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) were arrested.

Fourteen of the detentions occurred in the Kingdom's Eastern Province while the remaining arrests took place in the Western Province. Liberty said in a statement faxed to AFP in Nicosia.

"The Saudi government is hereby requested to stop the harsh course of measures adopted against CDLR members and sympathisers," it said. "Liberty believes that such measures can only complicate things."

It appealed to international human rights organisations and parliaments in "world democracies" to campaign for the release of Professor Mohammad Al Masaari and his detained fellow citizens, and to pressure the Saudi authorities into putting an immediate stop to their campaign against human rights activists in the kingdom.

On Monday, Liberty said that two employees of King Saud University in Riyadh, where a CDLR founder taught, had been arrested amid a wave of detentions.

No Iraq ties unless Saddam is gone, Kuwaiti minister says

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, calling Saddam Hussein a menace to the Gulf, has said it would normalise ties with Iraq only when his government was replaced by an administration that resolved outstanding issues between the two countries.

"He's a menace, a threat, not just to Kuwait but to all the Gulf countries," Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah said of the Iraqi president Monday.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and claimed it as its 19th province. A U.S.-led military alliance of Western and Arab armies drove out Iraqi troops in February 1991.

Asked how long it would take to normalise ties, Sheikh Saud replied: "It all depends on how long Saddam Hussein and his regime remain in power. Things could change very rapidly or they could take their time. I think we have to be ready to sit this out until we can get rid of him."

"Certainly Kuwait and Iraq are neighbours and they will remain neighbours forever. It is our intention that once there is a responsible regime in Iraq which respects international law and legitimacy and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait, things could be normalised."

The minister said outstanding issues included the 620 Kuwaitis that Kuwait says were taken captive during the occupation and are held in Iraq, Iraq's refusal to recognise a new border and Kuwait claims for compensation for war damage.

Iraq denies it holds Kuwaitis captive. Sheikh Saud said he had been shocked by the arrest last month of 16 people suspected of plotting to assassinate former U.S. Pres-

ident George Bush in Kuwait on orders from Iraqi intelligence. Iraq has denied any links to the suspects. It said Mr. Bush, who was in Kuwait from April 14 to 16, was not worth the explosives.

State prosecutors on Monday charged 10 Iraqis out of the 16 with attempting to blow up Mr. Bush. An Iraqi and a Kuwaiti were charged as accomplices — also a crime punishable by death.

Two more people of unspecified nationality were charged with providing shelter for some of the 12 without knowing their intentions. The trial has been set for June 5.

Two others will be charged with smuggling alcohol and their case will be tried separately. Mr. Bush's visit, aimed at honouring his Gulf war leadership, passed off without incident.

Sheikh Saud said the government was disappointed that Kuwaitis were among the suspects. "This is very disappointing for us and very unfortunate to find out that a number of Kuwaitis were among the people that were recruited by these Iraqi agents," he said.

"They were misled, according to our information, that it was (meant to be) a pure smuggling operation, smuggling of alcohol and drugs. We are extremely disappointed and they will be treated as the Iraqi agents will be treated," he said without elaborating.

"I cannot overemphasise that the number one priority in Kuwait is security," Sheikh Saud said. "Compared to security, all other issues which people are talking, discussing and writing about are irrelevant."

Sheikh Saud also said security remained by far its top priority more than two years after the Gulf war.

"I cannot overemphasise that the number one priority in Kuwait is security," Sheikh Saud told Reuters.

"Compared to security, all other issues which people are talking, discussing and writing about are irrelevant."

Sheikh Saud said a ditch Kuwait plans to build on its border with Iraq was only the first in a series of improvements to its defences against its northern neighbour.

Sheikh Saud said a ditch three metres deep and five metres wide and a rampart four metres high along the 207 kilometres of frontier would help keep out infiltrators and "terrorists," Baghdad might send.

"It is important for us to create some kind of an obstacle to control the flow of infiltrators and terrorists from Iraq."

"This (ditch) is only part, it is phase one of many security arrangements that will be made on the border," he said without elaborating.

Joint exercises with American, French and British forces were also aimed at building up military defences, he added.

"Our main concern is to improve our military defensive capability by these joint exercises, by training and (obtaining) up-to-date equipment."

Kuwaiti bank sues Iraqi banks

The National Bank of Kuwait sued Rafidain Bank of Iraq and the Central Bank of Iraq Monday for their alleged failure to pay back millions of dollars in loans.

The suit was filed in Manhattan federal court because a substantial part of the debts allegedly occurred in the U.S.

Electrical Projects Co., which is an agency of the Iraqi government, is also named as a defendant.



'EXERCISES': Palestinian youths from Hamas movement show military exercises with toy guns in Jabalya refugee camp, during a memorial day for the Ezzedeen Al Qassam, the armed group of Hamas that was killed last week by the Israeli army (AFP photo)

Kuwaiti speaker wants strong Iran ties

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Saadoun said in remarks published Tuesday Gulf Arab states ought to maintain good relations with Iran because it was a strong country.

"There is no need to create a new antagonism with Iran in a time in which we need to strengthen our relations with it, being a strong country in the region," Al Watan daily quoted the opposition veteran as saying.

"We hope that Iran shares the same tendency (towards strengthening ties) with us. We cannot ignore its presence in the region," he added.

"No one wants to turn the Gulf into a conflict region not among its states nor among the superpowers," Mr. Saadoun said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati started Tuesday a tour of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Mr. Velayati visits Kuwait on May 25.

Mr. Velayati's tour comes hot on the heels of a similar swing through the Gulf by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in which he tried to convince GCC leaders that Tehran was fomenting Muslim fundamentalist unrest beyond its border.

Tehran's ties with the GCC greatly improved after it denounced Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, but cooled again after the Arabs became concerned about its rearming and what neighbours view as its territorial ambitions.

Mr. Saadoun, reiterating widely-held official views, added: "It is impossible, at least for the time being, even to talk about having relations with some regimes such as the Iraqi regime... and also the Jordanian regime, which represents the head of the problem in the Arab region."

Hostility towards Jordan still runs high in Kuwait because of Jordanian and Palestinian peoples' sympathy for Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

Mr. Saadoun added it was impossible for any early resumption of ties between Kuwait and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Sudan or Yemen because of their sympathy for Iraq.

He added, without elaborating: "We must watch cautiously the political powers in Iraq, even the opposition, because it does not differ from the regime itself."

Freedom of expression would prevent extremism of any kind from taking hold in Kuwait, Mr. Saadoun was quoted as saying. "I don't think that terrorism or extremism can grow in countries

enjoying freedom of expression," newspapers quoted the opposition veteran as saying in a meeting with editors.

"Kuwait is an open country where freedom of expression and speech are guaranteed. People talk freely about all issues in diwaniyyahs (receptions) and in private. There is an atmosphere of dialogue and negotiation in the country which is contrary to terrorism."

Kuwait abolished press censorship following its 1991 Gulf war liberation from Iraqi occupation. Newspapers have responded enthusiastically by regularly printing outspoken commentaries on a range of sensitive political subjects.

The October 1992 revival of the fiery national assembly following a six-year break has further spurred national debate.

"Whoever says there is extremism in Kuwait indicated that he does not know the people of Kuwait and the nature of this community," Mr. Saadoun was quoted as saying.

Newspapers said Mr. Saadoun said Islamic groups in Kuwait did not export "terrorism."

"There is no extremism or terrorism in Kuwait because the Kuwaiti community is a peaceful one in which all enjoy freedom of opinion," he said.

Kurds 'do not want separate state'

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Kurdish representatives from Iraq and Turkey have affirmed that their people seek freedom and democracy within the countries they now inhabit — as opposed to the creation of an independent state.

"We realise it's difficult to change borders, and know that our solution now lies within the borders of the countries in which we live," said Ahmet Turk, chairman of the People's Labour Party in Turkey.

"The international climate is not conducive to the creation of new states," said Barham Salih, the Iraqi Kurds' representative in Washington. "We think it is cost-effective to seek a united, democratic Iraq that respects the rights of all its minorities."

Mr. Salih and Mr. Turk made the comments during a hearing sponsored by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) on the status of the Kurds living in Turkey, Iraq and Iran.

Mary Sue Hafner, deputy staff director of the CSCE, noted that the hearing was the latest in a series of minority issues being held by the commission.

Mark Epstein, a consultant and former congressional staffer and scholar-in-residence at the State Department, described the plight

of the Kurds as "enormously complex" precisely because they are minorities in various states.

Territory occupied by Kurdish people once belonged to the Ottoman empire, and has been divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and republics of the former Soviet Union since the end of World War I. With no common history for most of this century, he asked, "what are the commonalities?... what is the vision for cooperation... among the world's Kurds?"

Ms. Hafner noted that one thing shared by Kurdish minorities in those three countries, as well as in Syria and the former Soviet Union, is "the lack of institutional protection of their human rights... in varying degrees."

Another salient characteristic of major Kurdish organisations is their "willingness to work within current borders," Ms. Hafner suggested. Following the allied creation of a "safe haven" for the Kurds in northern Iraq, two Kurdish political parties supported the Turkish government against the separatist insurgents of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

According to Mr. Salih, Iraqi Kurds agreed to prevent PKK guerrillas from using bases in Iraqi territory because "we have an obligation to our neighbours

to secure our borders... and address the legitimate security concerns of Turkey."

Both Mr. Salih and Mr. Turk also pointed to the goals of "freedom and liberty" as features that unite most Kurds. Mr. Turk noted that the PKK took a "reality-check" and recently announced that it would respect the territorial integrity of Turkey "as long as there is freedom for the Kurds."

He described the current ceasefire between the Turkish government and the PKK as "genuine" and urged both sides to make permanent peace. "The opportunity at hand must be seized and must be pursued," he said.

Democratic forces around the world, Mr. Turk added, "should also give the Ankara government the moral support it needs" to realise peace with the insurgents.

According to Mr. Epstein, Turkey's leaders need to examine "whether Turkey can find a way to accommodate the legitimate Kurdish cultural aspirations, while maintaining its integrity as a state and its national character."

Barham Salih described the Kurds' successful experiment with democracy in their northern Iraqi enclave as a prelude to a reformed political system throughout the country.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Many bedoun ineligible for nationality — Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said it might grant nationality to some of the stateless Arabs who constitute almost 10 per cent of its population, but stressed many were ineligible. "We are now in process of sorting this issue out," Information Minister Sheikh Saud Nasser Al Sabah said in an interview with Reuters Monday evening. "There are people who have a right to Kuwaiti nationality and who were unjustly denied it in the past for one reason or another, and they will be looked into again on this issue, and their status will be corrected accordingly." But people who have no connection whatsoever according to the laws of Kuwait and citizenship will not be given that citizenship. It's only right and just," he said. The issue of stateless Arabs has become increasingly controversial because of a debate over the 40 per cent fall in the total population to 1.3 million since Iraq's 1990 invasion. The population fell largely because of the departure during the occupation and its immediate aftermath of Palestinians and stateless and other Arabs seen by Kuwait as pro-Iraqi. Official figures show there are 117,604 stateless people or "bedouns" in Kuwait, down from 220,000 in June 1991. Bedouns form a substantial part of armed forces personnel. Most of the bedouns are descended from nomads from the deserts of Arabia who settled in Kuwait but could not obtain citizenship because of strict nationality laws.

Saudi defence minister, Qatari emir hold talks

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's Defence Minister Prince Sultan met Qatar's Emir Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani Tuesday for talks aimed at strengthening ties between the two countries who fell out over a violent border dispute last year. The Qatar News Agency quoted Prince Sultan as saying on his arrival in Doha that relations between the two neighbouring Gulf states were "firm and solid." Three people died in a clash on the border between Saudi Arabia and Qatar last September, prompting a three-month crisis. In December they signed an Egyptian-mediated deal which ended the dispute and paved the way for Qatar to lift a boycott of the Gulf Cooperation Council regional alliance.

Amnesty team to visit Morocco despite attack

RABAT (R) — Amnesty International said Tuesday it will send a mission to Morocco this week despite strong criticism from King Hassan. A spokesman for the London-based human rights group said the mission, led by its Deputy Secretary-General Hervé Berger, was due in Rabat Wednesday for a visit of several days at the invitation of the Consultative Council for Human Rights. The multi-party council was appointed by the king three years ago to monitor human rights in Morocco and make recommendations to the monarch to improve them. There are also three other rights groups in Morocco, one of them independent and two others linked to opposition parties. "I say to Amnesty International it is an old and completely faded thing that has no further use," King Hassan told a French television journalist in an interview.

Kuwait seeks check on Bosnia captives

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait has asked the International Committee of the Red Cross to check whether there are any Kuwaitis among Muslims held by Croat fighters in Bosnia, a Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. The official, who declined to be identified, told Reuters Kuwait had asked the ICRC to obtain the names of any Arab captives in the embattled Bosnian town of Mostar to enable Kuwait to discover if any of its nationals were among them. The official said Kuwait had made the request following a report by a Kuwaiti humanitarian group that it was seeking United Nations help in trying to win freedom for a Kuwaiti mosque preacher held captive by Croat fighters in Bosnia. Tareq Al Issa of the Islamic Heritage Revival Society said Monday that the preacher, Kulaib Al Mutairi, had gone to Bosnia in December 1992 as part of a humanitarian mission by the society that helped Bosnian Muslims in need.

54 feared drowned in Somalia dhow accident

MOMBASA, Kenya (R) — Seven bodies have been recovered and 47 people were missing and feared drowned after a dhow taking Somali refugees home capsized off the Kenyan coastal town of Mombasa Monday, police said. Police and navy divers had rescued 26 people and fished seven bodies from the Indian Ocean. "Of the 80 people on board, we have accounted for only those," Kenyan police spokesman Jeremiah Matigaro told Reuters. "The others are still missing, possibly drowned." He said navy divers had launched an intensified search for possible survivors and for bodies Tuesday. Mr. Matigaro said the dhow, named MV Sayed Mohammad, had 62 passengers and 18 crew aboard. One survivor told local newspapers the dhow capsized due to excessive cargo loaded on the upper deck.

12 killed in anti-drugs operation

TEHRAN (AFP) — Security forces have killed or wounded 20 traffickers in an operation in southeast Iran that netted 11 tonnes of drugs, Jomhuri Islami newspaper said Tuesday. Revolutionary Guards and the army seized six tonnes of drugs and set fire to another five tonnes, it said. Twelve smugglers were killed and eight wounded in a "surprise and coordinated attack." Security forces also seized arms and ammunition, including a multiple rocket launcher during the operation in the Saravan region of Sistan va Baluchestan province. The paper did not say when it took place or give other details. More than 60 tonnes of drugs — mainly opium, heroin and morphine — were hauled last year in Iran, the main transit route for drugs from Pakistan and Afghanistan headed for Europe.

Briton charged with helping Kurdish rebels

SILOPI, Turkey (AP) — Authorities Monday arrested a British journalist who crossed into Turkey from Iraqi-Kurdish controlled northern Iraq, and official said. The semi-official Anatolia news agency identified him as Andrew Norman Penny, 39, a free-lance journalist. It said Mr. Penny and Faik Bulut, a Turkish journalist for the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgur Gundem, were taken into custody two days ago for allegedly possessing illegal Turkish. Kurdish documents and video tapes Saturday. They were formally arrested Monday. The Turkish journalist was released, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Silopi is near the Iraqi border.

OBITUARY

George Suleiman Tannous and family, his mother Salma, His Uncle Dr. Izzat and family, and Fuad's daughters Rhona and Shereen, his sisters Lily, Wadad, Hilda and son Nadim and all the Tannous's family and friends in Jordan and overseas: The Gumris, Bahnans, Domians, Grahams, Nuquls and the Jallads, deeply mourn their beloved:

FUAD SULEIMAN TANNOUS

who passed away in London. His funeral ceremony will be held in the Al-Fadi Arab Anglican Church, Jabal Amman Friday May 21st, at 4:00 p.m. following which he will be laid to rest in the Um El-Hiran Cemetery. Condolences will be received for three days as of Friday. Gentlemen at his brother's home in Jabal Amman 4th Circle, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. For the Ladies at Fuad's home, same building during the morning hours.

In honour of Fuad's memory and request; instead of sending flowers, your contributions towards charitable funds through the Al-Fadi Church office will be appreciated.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 L'histoire des Climats
19:00 News in French
19:15 French Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Chance in a million
21:00 Local Programme
21:15 Soccer Watch
22:00 News in English
22:30 Second Half of Match
23:00 The Gravy Train

PRAYER TIMES

04:02 Fajr
05:32 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:32 Dhur
16:13 'Asr
19:32 Maghrib
21:02 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swediteh, Tel. 810740
Assessments of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terranova Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 625453

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 625226

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be westerly moderate to fresh, causing dust in desert areas. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with chance for scattered showers, and winds will be northerly fresh and seas wavy.

AMMAN: Min./Max. temp.

Amman: 14 / 25

Aqaba: 19 / 33

Deserts: 12 / 29

Jordan Valley: 17 / 31

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 29, Aqaba 36. Humidity readings: Amman 19 per cent, Aqaba 22 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Jamal Al-Jabri 796460

Dr. Mohammad Al-Ghoul 790730

Dr. Mikhles Halse 819220

Dr. Mohammad Inuran 612232

Firas pharmacy 661912

Perdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asmaa pharmacy 637055

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisat pharmacy 637660

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Najid pharmacy 847632

IBBIS:

Dr. Mazen Shara (—)

Al Oudis pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Samir Al Lawzi (—)

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 630341

Rescue 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blind Bank 775121

Highway Police 834302

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 877111

Amman Municipality 787111

Telephone Information 121

(directory assistance) 010230

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774112

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power

Company:

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/22

Khalifeh Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6

Al-Khaleel Maternity, J. Amn. 64341/2

Malha Amman Maternity 642362

Jabal, J. Amman 636140

Al-Salam, Shmeisat 664171/4

Shmeisat Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muhsen Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 630321

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Mahajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/2

Army, J. Marja 891611/15

Crown Prince sees off Jordan's peace-keepers

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday saw off soldiers from the Jordanian Armed Forces who left for Croatia to replace the Jordanian Armed Forces personnel working as part of the United Nations peace-keeping forces there.

Prince Hassan conveyed to the departing soldiers the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein and wished them every success in their humanitarian tasks.

The Crown Prince urged them to carry out their duties in the best manner and to safeguard Jordan's good reputation worldwide.

Prince Hassan's visit to the soldiers was part of a tour to armed forces units currently on military exercises.

The Crown Prince listened to a briefing on stages of training. Accompanying Prince Hassan were the Chief of Staff of Land Forces and the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Training.

Marathon heart surgeries end in success

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A team of four cardiologists headed by Yousef Qousus, director of the Royal Medical Services, Tuesday successfully conducted three heart surgeries on two Jordanians and an Omani citizen.

The three operations were performed at the Queen Alia Heart Centre.

Taking part in the six-hour marathon sessions was Richard Schatz, a senior cardiologist at the University of California, who is now on a visit to Jordan.

The three patients underwent similar coronary artery stenting operations in separate sessions guided by Dr. Schatz, said Dr. Qousus.

He told the Jordan Times that the first patient's operation involved implanting two cylindrical-shaped stents made of stainless steel.

These were introduced over a balloon and implanted across the obstruction, he noted.

According to Dr. Qousus the first patient was a physician who underwent coronary bypass surgery, 12-years ago, but the graft was found to have been blocked.

His case was treated, with the stents implanted in the obstructed graft, thus saving him another heart surgery that would have otherwise been required, said Dr. Qousus.

Similar successful operations, but with one stent only, were conducted on a woman from Oman and another Jordanian citizen, noted Dr. Qousus.

He said the patients were resting comfortably at the hospital and were in good condition.

Christians, Muslims should unite efforts to foster stability, coexistence — Patriarch

AMMAN (Petra) — Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem Michael Sabbah Tuesday underlined the importance for the Christian and Muslim communities in bolstering their cooperation to ensure further stability and co-existence within the Kingdom and throughout the Arab World.

"We live through difficult times, and Christians and Muslims are together facing difficult circumstances and complicated situations, which call for them to unite their efforts and enhance national unity," said the patriarch in an address at the opening of a four-day conference by Catholic bishops of the Middle East.

The Christians and Muslims in Jordan form one people and a united family, enjoying equal privileges and opportunities as advocated and guaranteed by His Majesty King Hussein, said Patriarch Sabbah.

The theme of the conference, the third of its kind since 1991, is mainly Islamic-Christian relations; and it is hoped it will contribute to further strengthening the coexistence between the two peoples, Patriarch Sabbah noted.

He said it is also hoped that the conference would further explain the church's role towards enhancing Islamic-Christian ties.



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday receives Catholic bishops of the Middle East. The bishops expressed their gratitude for the Jordanian government's support and facilities they provided to the conference. King Hussein wished the conference every success. The audience was attended by the Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Turkish president

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday sent a cable to Turkish President Suleiman Demirel, congratulating him on his election and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the Turkish people further progress and prosperity.

Public holiday to be observed May 25

AMMAN (Petra) — Tuesday May 25 will be observed as a public holiday in Jordan on the country's Independence Day anniversary. A statement issued by the Prime Minister's office Tuesday said all government departments and public institutions will be closed on that day.

Last Jordanian group arrives safely for Haj

MEDINA (Petra) — The last group of Jordanian Muslims performing this year's pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina arrived by land here Tuesday. A spokesman for the Jordanian official mission accompanying the pilgrims said that all arrived safely. The spokesman said the pilgrims will proceed to Mecca where they will perform the Haj religious rites. Meanwhile, Minister of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs Izzeddine Al Khatib Al Yamini, Tuesday, left for Saudi Arabia to head the Jordanian pilgrim teams.

Minister reviews bilateral ties with visiting Romanian envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Planning Minister Ziad Fariz Tuesday met with the Romanian Deputy Minister of Trade and reviewed with him bilateral relations in various fields. The two officials also discussed preparations for the meetings of the joint Jordanian-Romanian committee, to be held in Bucharest in July. Also discussed Tuesday was the possibility of concluding two new agreements on economic and technical cooperation between both countries. The meeting was attended by the ministry Secretary General Safwan Tougan.

Media group to review freedom of press

AMMAN (Petra) — "Freedom of the Press in Jordan" is the title of a day-long seminar which will be held at the Royal Cultural Centre in Amman Sunday. The Jordanian Media Society is organising the seminar which will be addressed by the RCC's Director Iyad Qattan and several other prominent personalities.

Seminar to focus on privatisation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen's Association Monday will hold a seminar at Forte Grand Hotel in Amman. Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Ali Suheimat will present a working paper at the seminar on "Privatisation and the Investment Climate in Jordan."

Jordan to attend international accountants meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the annual meeting of the board of directors of the International Accountants Federation which will be held in Mexico May 19. Representing Jordan at the meeting will be Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Certified Accountants Society Talal Abu Ghazaleh.

Jordan to participate in biodiversity meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in an international conference on protection and conservation of biodiversity to be held in Norway May 24. Member of the Jordanian delegation to the conference, Fakhri Okour, who heads the Environmental Education and Information Section at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment, said the conference is organised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Environment. The conference seeks to follow up on the implementation of the 1992 Bio-diversity Agreement, signed by more than 160 countries.

European delegations begin to arrive for talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Several delegations from European countries will arrive in Amman within the next two weeks to hold talks with Jordanian officials on bilateral relations between Jordan and their countries, the situation in the region, the Middle East peace process and issues of common interest. These delegations will come from the Netherlands, Switzerland and Hungary. Swiss Deputy Foreign Minister Jacob Calmbarger arrived here Tuesday for the talks.

AIDS cases number 86 in Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Health Ministry Tuesday announced that the number of people who are registered as HIV positive or infected by the AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) virus since 1986 has reached 86.

The cases include 67 Jordanian citizens and 19 non-Jordanians, according to Saad Kharabseh, director of the Health Ministry's Department for Combating Diseases.

Out of the total number, 56 were infected by the virus outside Jordan and 30 inside the Kingdom, said Dr. Kharabseh at the opening of a Health Ministry-organised workshop on AIDS in Jordan.

In December 1992 Health Minister Aref Al Bataineh reported that the number of people registered as HIV positive in Jordan stood at 79, and noted that most of the cases resulted from blood transfusions conducted abroad.

Dr. Kharabseh told the workshop, which was organised in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO), that since the start of the 1980s until the end of 1992, 650,000 new AIDS cases have been diagnosed worldwide, adding that most of these were reported in the United States, Africa and Europe, with fewer cases reported in Australia and Asia.

WHO estimates the number of AIDS cases to be three times the official number reported to the organisation, which means nearly two million AIDS cases appeared during the 1980-1992 period, Dr. Kharabseh said.

WHO also estimates that the world now has 12 million AIDS cases, many of which are persons considered as AIDS virus carriers who can endanger others, added Dr. Kharabseh.

Since 1986, the Health Ministry has conducted a series of public awareness campaigns through schools, universities and the media aimed at educating people on the dangers of AIDS and means of protecting themselves against the disease.

Participants in Tuesday's workshop, who included representatives of public and private sectors, hospitals and concerned groups, reviewed Jordan's health education programmes on preventing the spread of AIDS.

They discussed widening such programmes through the media.

Supply ministry to set up storage complexes

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Supply Tuesday announced plans for building or receiving supply complexes and warehouses in Madaba, Zarqa, Irbid, Balqa and other regions, noting that these projects have an overall cost of JD 15 million.

Minister of Supply Mohammad Saqqaf made the announcement upon signing a contract with a local firm for the construction of the Madaba supply complex at an estimated cost of JD 300,000.

He said the complex will have a storage capacity of 10,000 tonnes of food supplies kept in sacks or bags.

The ministry expects to receive a 20,000-tonne-capacity supply complex in Zarqa in two months.

These projects, he said, are part of the ministry's drive to ensure sufficient food reserves in the Kingdom to cope with population growth.

Visiting Hungarian envoy voices concern for Mideast, Bosnia Herzegovina situations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday received a message from the Hungarian president, containing an invitation for the King to visit Hungary.

The message was delivered to King Hussein by the under secretary at the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Andrash Kaldman, who was received in an audience with His Majesty.

Also present at the audience was the director of the Arab Department at the Hungarian foreign ministry.

The two officials conveyed congratulations of the Hungarian president to King Hussein on the 40th anniversary of the assumption of his constitutional powers.

King Hussein praised the ties of friendship between both countries and voiced Jordan's interest in further bolstering these relations on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation.

King Hussein stressed the need for addressing pressing issues as a prelude to achieving a secure future based on justice, peace, stability, respect for human rights, freedoms and democracy.

The Hungarian officials praised Jordan's democratic achievements and Jordan's approach in addressing international and regional crisis.

The audience was attended by



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday receives Secretary Andrash Kaldman at the Royal Court.

Royal Court Chief Khalid Al Karaki.

Kaldman also discussed the situations in the Middle East and Bosnia-Herzegovina with Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and the Speaker of the Senate during separate meetings here Tuesday.

Accompanied by an official delegation, Mr. Kaldman discussed with Dr. Abu Jaber Hungarian-Jordanian economic, trade and cultural relations.

Mr. Kaldman, who arrived earlier Tuesday on a three-day visit to Jordan, later called on Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi to discuss issues of common concern to Jordan and Hungary.

The Hungarian envoy was quoted as saying his country was concerned over events in the Middle East.

He said Hungary calls for the implementation of U.N. resolutions, as it believes the use of force should not determine the destiny of nations like those in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Middle East.

In paying tribute to His Majesty King Hussein for his continued efforts for peace, the Hungarian official said that his country appreciates Jordan's participation in the U.N. peace-keeping forces to help preserve world peace.

He also said his country hopes to bolster Hungarian-Jordanian ties and cooperation in parliamentary affairs.

The Hungarian official, who extended an invitation to Mr. Lawzi to visit Hungary at the head of a Jordanian parliamentary delegation, listened to a briefing on Jordan's political stand regarding the Middle East and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Lawzi said Jordan backs Hungary's call for the implementation of U.N. resolutions on the situations in the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia.

Transiting Polish team visits House speaker

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-member Polish parliamentary delegation headed by Stefan Pastuszewski, made a stop over in Amman before leaving for Baghdad later Tuesday on a four-day official visit to Iraq.

The delegation members paid a courtesy visit to Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arbiyat, with whom they discussed the possibility of developing bilateral relations in the parliamentary field.

Mr. Pastuszewski voiced his country's interest in strengthening bilateral relations with Jordan, and praised Jordan's democratisation process, saying that it qualifies it to play a major role in the region.

The delegation members proposed the formation of a joint Jordanian-Polish committee to look into means of developing relations between both countries in all fields.

Dr. Arbiyat welcomed the development of relations with the Polish parliament and called on all nations of the world to participate in shaping the features of a new world order, capable of ending the injustices done by the previous order.

The delegation will pay a one-day visit to Jordan Saturday on their way back from Baghdad, according to Polish embassy sources.



HIS MAJESTY King Hussein received at the Royal Court Royal Jordanian (RJ) President and Chief Executive Officer Mahmoud Jamal Balqez who presented him with a gift on the 40th anniversary of the King's assumption of his constitutional powers. The gift came from the RJ staff in appreciation of King Hussein's role in promoting the national carrier's role among international airlines.

Environmental protection campaign begins

AMMAN (Petra) — The Environment Department of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment is carrying out a national public awareness campaign on citizens' role in protecting the environment in Jordan, according to Director of the Department's Environmental Education Section Fawzi Al Ukour.

Mr. Ukour said at the current stage, the campaign targets school students who constitute 30 per cent of Jordan's population.

Taxi owners union affairs under investigation

Member asserts complaint initiated by angry employee

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Authorities are investigating the affairs of the Union of Taxi Owners in Jordan following allegations of embezzlement and violations of the statute of the organisation, union officials said Tuesday.

Officials from the Prosecutor-General's office Monday visited the union and took possession of documents for scrutiny after a complaint was filed with the authorities, they said.

Local reports said the complaint, which charged that union officials were misappropriating union funds and violating regulations laid down in the charter of the union, was filed by 18 taxi owners.

Abdullah Kasi, president of the administrative council of the union, was not available for comment.

But Fuad Al Badri, one of its members, asserted that the affair was initiated by someone he described as a disgruntled employee who was under investigation by the union.

"He (the employee) filed the complaint obviously with a view to retaliating for the action we are taking against him," said Mr. Badri.

"We are as surprised as anyone that reports said the complaint was filed by a group of taxi owners," he told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Badri denied that there was any ground for charges of embezzlement and violations at the union and said:

"We do have a proper accounting system and have regular auditing, and our books are open for the members to inspect any time they want."

The union official also rejected reports that the authorities had sealed the premises of the union.

"You have reached me over the phone at the union office, and that in itself shows that there is no sealing off the premises of the union," he told the Jordan Times.

"Our workshop is also open and is functioning normally," he added.

Mr. Badri identified the employee whom he accused of starting the affair and said the man was working with the union for over 10 years as a mechanic in its workshop, where taxi metres are installed and repaired under an authority given by the concerned government department.

The man named by Mr. Badri could not be reached immediately. Nor was it known whether it was the same person mentioned in a local report as a union "engineer who confessed to the authorities."

Dozens of taxi offices contacted by the Jordan Times on Tuesday said they were not party to the complaint and were not aware of its contents.

"Affairs of the union had always been controversial," said the owner of a taxi office who declined to be named. "It is not surprising that such issues reach the authorities off and on."

An official who answered the phone at the prosecutor-general's office said the authorities will not have any comment since the matter is still under investigation.

Precise details of the complaint were not available, but it was the latest in a series of charges involving the union in the past several years.

The union represents all the 250 taxi offices and estimated 7,000 taxi drivers in Jordan. It collects JD 10 in annual subscription from the taxi offices and JD 9 per vehicle — a total revenue of close to JD 65,000.

According to Mr. Badri, the levy on taxis includes JD 6 in maintenance charges for metres, and the union makes no profit on spare parts.

"The maintenance charge comes to half a dinar a month regardless of the number of times a metre might be inspected and repaired at our workshop," he said.

"Whenever spare parts are required, we charge the actual cost only and there is no labour cost," he said.

Many taxi-drivers charge that the union is levying high costs for the spares as well as new metres, since it is the sole authority in the field.

They also assert that they do not get proper service and sometimes have to wait for days before getting their metres repaired.

Such delays, they say, deprive them of their livelihood since they cannot operate in the streets with faulty metres.

Union elections had also drawn controversies, with various sides charging each other of trying to buy votes and of intimidating voters.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of the Young Muslim Women's Society at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition entitled "Fragments: Weavings and Works on Paper" by Kevin A. Eluch and Margaret M. Eluch at the American Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Suha Katibah Noursi at the Spanish Cultural.
- ★ Art exhibition of works by artists from Jordan, Iraq and Morocco at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Children's illustration exhibition by Lamia Abdul Sahib at the British Council.
- ★ Art exhibition by Patrice Pain at the French Cultural Centre.

LECTURE

- ★ Lecture, in Arabic, by Jabra L. Jabra, Dr. G. Sayegh and Professor Rafe' Nasir on the painting exhibition "Legend of Petra II" by Suha Shomman at the National Gallery, Jabal Luvweidh — 6 p.m.

Film

- ★ Film entitled "A Town Like Alice" at the British Council at 7 p.m.

MARKET PRICES
Wheat (local) 100 kg 1.10
Wheat (import) 100 kg 1.15
Barley (local) 100 kg 0.80
Barley (import) 100 kg 0.85
Soya beans 100 kg 1.50
Rice 100 kg 1.20
Onions 100 kg 0.50
Potatoes 100 kg 0.40
Lentils 100 kg 0.60
Chickpeas 100 kg 0.55
Sugar 100 kg 0.90
Flour 100 kg 0.70
Milk (per litre) 0.15
Eggs (per dozen) 1.00
Chicken (per kg) 1.50
Turkey (per kg) 2.00
Pork (per kg) 1.80
Beef (per kg) 1.60
Lamb (per kg) 1.70
Mutton (per kg) 1.60
Dairy products (various) 0.50-1.00
Fruit and vegetables (various) 0.20-1.50
Meat (various) 1.00-2.00
Seafood (various) 1.50-3.00
Breads (various) 0.10-0.20
Snacks (various) 0.10-0.50
Alcohol (various) 1.00-5.00
Tobacco (various) 1.00-2.00
Cigarettes (various) 0.10-0.50
Medicine (various) 0.10-1.00
Books (various) 0.10-1.00
Clothing (various) 0.10-1.00
Shoes (various) 0.10-1.00
Furniture (various) 0.10-1.00
Electronics (various) 0.10-1.00
Automobiles (various) 1.00-10.00
Real estate (various) 1.00-10.00
Services (various) 0.10-1.00
Miscellaneous (various) 0.10-1.00

By Tom Porteous

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UNEP boss says governments fail Rio Earth Summit pledge

NAIROBI (R) — The new head of the United Nations environmental agency UNEP, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, said Monday that its budget had been cut despite pledges of more support at last year's Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.

Elizabeth Dowdeswell of Canada told the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) annual governing council that the lack of cash undermined the credibility of the 20-year-old agency.

In her first major address since taking over the U.N. watchdog last month, Ms. Dowdeswell criticised both the world governments which fund UNEP and the agency itself and pledged to "reverse constructive damage to the status quo."

"The question being asked by many is this: What happened to the agenda agreed at Rio (de Janeiro), which called for UNEP's role to be enhanced, for its resources to be expanded — and yet its budget has been shrunk," said Ms. Dowdeswell.

"Governments are ready to put only a quarter of the \$1.3 billion (they pledged) into the environment fund. Is it any wonder that our critics view with scepticism the real commitment," she told the meeting at its Nairobi headquarters.

"Does it mean that Rio was nothing more than a show for the press, does it mean that the word of 120 heads of government means nothing," she asked.

She gave no figures for a budget cut worked out by a council meeting last week but said it represented a "retreat from solemn undertakings."

Ms. Dowdeswell said she found the agency directionless when she took over from Egypt's Mustafa Tolba earlier this year and pledged to give it a world role.

"The policies we pursue will be beyond rhetoric. We will achieve tangible improvements in the health of the world's overburdened environment and the quality of life of all peoples. When I arrived at this organisation some four months ago, one of the first things I did was to look for a concise statement of the organisation's mission — there isn't one," she said.

She said UNEP needed to re-define its priorities — reorganise its secretariat and better manage its affairs. She said hiring and promotion policies at the U.N. often "bordered on the perverse," which kept away professionals of high standing.

Ms. Dowdeswell gave no details but many UNEP staff complain privately that the agency is a sinecure for a large number of international staff who receive diplomatic status when transferred to Nairobi in return for little real work.

She pledged a credible and service-oriented UNEP in her term which would win the confidence of governments and justify its existence.

The number of bankruptcies jumped to a six-year high in the year to March while the amount of liabilities involved reached their second highest level on record, a credit research agency has said.

Teikoku Data Bank Ltd. said the number of bankruptcies grew 22.7 per cent from a year earlier to 14,441 cases, the highest level since 1986 when 16,886 companies collapsed under the weight of a stronger yen.

Liabilities came to 7,446 billion yen (\$66 billion), down 4.2 per cent from 1991 record of 7,774 billion yen and the first decline since 1989.

The number of big corporate failures with liabilities of one billion yen or more jumped 22.8 per cent to a record 177 cases. Most were concentrated in the December quarter when the Japanese economic slowdown was at its worst.

"The increase in bankruptcies was due to the prolonged economic stagnation and the recent yen rise, which particularly hit export industries including car and electronics makers," Mr. Teikoku said.

The agency, which also blamed sluggish personal consumption from keeping inventories high and depressing investment, said the high level of corporate failures was expected to continue in the current year.

Bankruptcies in the manufacturing sector, accounting for the biggest share of failures, soared 43 per cent, although the transport and information sectors posted the sharpest increase of 55 per cent. Construction industry failures were up 22 per cent but those in the real-estate sector were almost unchanged.

Major failures included housing products manufacturer Lec Inc., the first listed company to go bankrupt in Japan since 1986, with 25 billion yen in liabilities. Another listed company, textile manufacturer Daichiboseki Co. Ltd., went under with liabilities of 80 billion yen.

Mr. Teikoku said most of the failures were related to Japanese real-estate market's collapse or slow inventory adjustment.

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Japan's corporate failures hit 6-year high

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Clinton discloses financial holdings

SAN DIEGO, California (R) — President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary have accumulated between \$534,000 and \$1.7 million in savings, stocks and bonds, according to a financial disclosure statement released by the White House late Monday.

The statement covers 1992 and thus does not reflect any changes in Mr. Clinton's financial situation since he assumed the presidency on Jan. 20 this year.

Most of the Clintons' money appears to be invested in money market funds, a low-yielding investment that could either reflect a cautious approach to the financial markets or a desire not to own large blocks of stock in individual companies so as to avoid conflicts of interest.

The couple owns some shares, however, including a significant block of shares of department store chain Wal-Mart Stores Inc. valued at between \$100,000 and \$250,000.

Wal-Mart has its headquarters in Mr. Clinton's home state of Arkansas, and its late chairman, Sam Walton, was a friend of the president's.

All other individual stock holdings of the first family were valued at far less — in the range of \$1,000 to \$15,000, including shares in NYNEX Corp. Bell Atlantic Corp and BellSouth Corp.

Mr. Clinton received \$33,272 in salary as governor of Arkansas last year, according to the disclosure form. The governor's salary, which has since been raised, is fixed in the state constitution and was at the time the lowest gubernatorial salary in the nation.

Mrs. Clinton's stake in her Little Rock law firm, the Rose law firm, was valued at between \$100,000 and \$250,000. She quit the firm when the Clintons moved to Washington to start his presidency.

The form also disclosed that Mr. Clinton last year paid off two campaign loans taken to help finance his 1990 gubernatorial reelection campaign.

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Honda earnings plunge 32%

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Honda Motor Co. Ltd. said Tuesday that its consolidated pre-tax earnings fell by 32.3 per cent from the figure a year earlier to \$8.6 billion yen (\$763 million) in the year to March.

The company, which ranks as Japan's third biggest carmaker worldwide, said that group sales fell by 5.9 per cent to some 4,132 billion yen in the same period, mainly depressed by sluggish sales in North America and Japan. This was offset by stronger sales in other Asian countries and South America.

For the coming year, Honda forecast a net profit of 23 billion yen, down from 38.3 billion yen in the latest year, on reduced revenue of around 4,000 billion yen. The company made no projection for pre-tax earnings.

Honda said that the lower revenue forecast mainly reflected the impact of the stronger yen. "Although the world's major automobile markets seemingly will continue to expand, Honda is planning to expand its sales mainly through the introduction of new models," the company said in a statement.

Analysts said Honda's failure to introduce new models since October were partly responsible for the company's weak domestic sales.

Peter Broadman, an analyst at the Tokyo branch of UBS Securities Ltd. reckons the company suffers from a poor product mix compared with its competitors. Moreover, Honda has failed to make an aggressive entry into the lucrative recreation vehicle market, he said.

In the year just ended, car revenue fell 9.1 per cent to 3,280 billion yen, while sales volume dropped 8.6 per cent to 1.79 million units.

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Turkish bankers take new interest in north Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — Eighteen commercial and offshore banks have sprung up in Turkish-held north Cyprus in the last six months, lured by the prospect of a united Cyprus joining the European Community (EC) and hopes of opening branches in Turkey.

"It is very difficult to set up new banks in Turkey now," said Demetris Sayiner, governor of the central bank of the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC).

"Eventually Cyprus will join the EC and these banks hope to have a place in the Community then," he told Reuters in an interview.

Cyprus has already applied to join the EC over protests by the Turkish-Cypriot north, recognised only by Ankara.

Cyprus has been split since 1974 when Turkey invaded the north to block an attempt by Greek-Cypriot coup leaders to unite the island with Greece, then led by a military junta.

Many Turkish Cypriots resent the way the Greek Cypriots went ahead with the application without their consent, but still look forward to the day when a future federation reunites the island's two communities might enter the EC.

The central bank says six new Turkish-owned commercial banks have started up in the last six months, pushing the total to 20, serving a population of no more than 150,000 to 170,000.

Two more commercial banks are awaiting government approval to enter the excessively crowded market.

In the same period, 12 offshore banking units (OBUs) have opened. Most are Turkish-owned but two are German and one is Pakistani.

Some exist only on paper. Others operate from tiny tower offices and are able to tap low-cost deposits from mainland Turkey and lend money back to Turkish banks.

"High reserve requirements raise the cost of deposits in Turkey. But attracting money to offshore units, both the depositors and the banks benefit," said the general manager of a newly-established OBU in north Cyprus. He asked not to be named.

Mr. Sayiner said the TRNC imposes relatively low capital requirements of 25 billion lira (\$2.5 million) for commercial banks and five billion (\$500,000) for OBUs, adding to its attraction for companies and individuals from Turkey.

Turkey, which has restricted new banking licences, requires foreign bank branches to have a capital of 150 billion lira (\$15 million), beyond the reach of most banks in north Cyprus.

Local commercial banks are competing for a relatively small deposit base, estimated at 3.5 trillion lira (\$350 million).

"The size of the pie has not changed," said Peter Turgud, general manager of Kibris Ticaret Bankasi Ltd., one of the biggest and oldest banks in north Cyprus.

Bankers say the influx of banks and OBUs started when Yahya Demirel, a controversial figure in Turkey who is the nephew of Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, arrived in November.

He set up a commercial bank, Kibris Yatirim Bankasi Ltd., which now has three branches in north Cyprus, and an OBU.

The Turkish lira is legal tender in north Cyprus, which is therefore sensitive to Turkey's 58 per cent annual inflation rate, the lira's sinking dollar parity and high interest rates.

The Turkish Cypriot government is encouraging new banks and OBUs, in the hope of creating an international financial centre to rival the offshore market in the Greek-Cypriot south.

"The banks also create employment and bring in much-needed capital," said Mr. Sayiner.

But some bankers, who asked not to be named, warned that the new commercial banks might lose their capital if they built a client base on lending to shaky or inefficient enterprises.

They said that four or five banks were already saddled with a total of 120 billion lira (\$12 million) in non-performing loans to the sluggish tourism industry.

Mr. Sayiner said the new banks would be as strictly supervised as in any other country.

Violence damaging S. African tourist trade

DURBAN (R) — South Africa lost up to 500 rand (\$160 million) in tourism earnings last year as a direct result of political violence, tourism chief Piet van Hoven has said.

Mr. Van Hoven, chairman of the Tourism Board (Satour), told a news conference the number of foreign tourists visiting South Africa last year drew by only 7.4 per cent compared to the board's expectation of 20 per cent.

"We have not had a violence-free year in the past five years, and before that (foreign tourists) had the moral problem of visiting South Africa because of apartheid," Mr. Van Hoven added.

Satour aims to boost domestic tourism, which contributes about 60 per cent of the country's earnings from tourism.

"A large section of the population did not have access to the industry before, which implies a significant growth for the industry in future," Mr. Van Hoven said.

In reference to the end of apartheid restrictions on blacks.

Chief director for tourism promotion, Ernie Heath, said Satour recently launched an aggressive international marketing programme to attract around 960,000 foreign tourists by 1995 and some 1.7 billion by the end of the century.

"However, it is essential that violence and political turbulence in the country come to an end as soon as possible. Only when the safety of the international tourist can be ensured, will visitors be attracted to South Africa on a larger scale," Mr. Heath said.

Satour said it was particularly pleased with the increase of tourists from Africa which showed a cumulative growth of 80 per cent last year compared to 1991.

More than two million people from African countries visited South Africa in 1991, an all-time record, Satour said.

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OUR BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By Harris Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VATLE
SHAMC
THANYS
CHELEK

WHY THE HEN SAT ON AN AX.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answers tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumble: FLOUT CAMEO JUMPER DIVERT

Put the words who keep putting them off usually to do the — PUT THEM OVER

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY MAY 19, 1993

By Thomas S. Fierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Show that you are one who is considerate of others and that you are willing to go out of your way to provide charm in your surroundings. Arguing puts you behind the eightball. Avoid new purchases and gossip.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Come to a new and a better agreement with those you regard as usual and dependable allies and show them your true understanding of issues you have.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You can add much charm and whatever others like in the duties you perform today so extend this as far as possible, tonight seek data in confidence.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A trip to make arrangements with congenial companions for the various social and recreational events you anticipate, then quietly do necessary planning of details.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A touch of beauty here and of more operative skill there at home will make your residence more harmonious, tonight you can quietly enjoy pleasures.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be less regal and more aware of the needs and desires of usual companions which will please them very much and tonight enjoy your home comforts.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You would be wise to increase the value of your property and possessions now in any way that brings more attractiveness to your holdings.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is the day for you to extend charm and suggestion to all you meet and to get their approval for your pet projects, then do necessary practical duties.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You like to know all phases of whatever intrigues your curiosity or sense of mystery and today finds you able to ferret out answers you seek.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Understanding and attractive friends can bring you much that is pleasant so see as many as possible and tonight seek ways to show your appreciation.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take some time out during the day to build up your sense where anything of a civic or a credit nature are concerned for you can do so easily.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be on the lookout for some give and take with new associates who are equipped with knowledge for which you are seeking, tonight use it in a worldly manner.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have an excellent day to sit down and work out with your make a new set of circumstances which can bring you both greater well being.

THE Daily Crossword by Avery P. Bromfield

ACROSS

- Joining words

Bosnian Serbs bury their dead

FAKOVICI, Bosnia-Herzegovina (Agencies) — Bishop Vasilje, giving the Orthodox blessing to the remains of 17 Serb villagers killed by Muslim Slavs, was emphatic: "Behold the fruit of hatred and false brotherhood."

It was an open call for the physical separation of Bosnia's war-embroiled communities, at a time when the Bosnian Serb leadership is pressing for a separate state.

The bodies of the old men and some women were unearthed last Sunday at Ratkovic, a hamlet perched in the mountains 20 kilometres from the nearest paved road on the way to the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica.

Locals said the villagers were killed in a Muslim raid last June. Their bones were brought here for burial alongside the 100 civilians, partisans, killed by pro-German militia, lying in the memorial to the dead of World War II.

Fakovici too has been caught up in the guerrilla war raging in eastern Bosnia for the past year. All Serb dwellings were set on fire when Muslim groups mounted an expedition against the village last September. Only the tiny Orthodox Church and the priest's house were left standing.

"The killings will go on for another 100 years if we do not find an intelligent solution enabling us to separate Serbs, Croats

and Muslims," warned General Milan Gvero. He was among a large turnout of Bosnian Serb military at the burial of the Ratkovic victims.

Mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg ventured into Bosnia's war zone Tuesday in a new effort to bring peace to the former Yugoslav republic.

They were heading for the Bosnian Croat town of Medjugorje for talks with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic.

Medjugorje, a place of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics, is near the southwestern Bosnian city of Mostar, where Muslim and Croat forces have battled for the past eight days.

A U.N. spokesman in Geneva said the meeting might take place in Mostar if the warring factions observed a truce.

The U.N. spokesman told Reuters: "The question this morning was whether the conditions would permit it — if the ceasefire holds. The meeting will be held only if there are no major risks or difficulties."

Mostar was the scene of a massive explosion Monday night, which Croatian radio said was caused when a Muslim ammunition dump blew up.

Croats and Muslims, once allies against the Serbs, have turned against each other in an attempt to grab territory.

U.N. officials described the

situation in the town as "very dangerous" with access controlled by Croat forces.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, accompanied by his Deputy Vitaly Churkin, arrived in the Croatian port of Split at the start of a mission to promote a new peace effort by Moscow.

Spanish and Danish foreign ministers were also in Split Tuesday, although it was not clear whether they would meet the mediators.

Mr. Kozyrev has expressed his backing for a peace plan for Bosnia worked out by Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, Mr. Stoltenberg's predecessor.

Mr. Kozyrev, who was expected in Belgrade later Tuesday, said the international community would not let "a few militants and warlords" in Bosnia get in the way of peace.

Bosnian Serbs, in a referendum whose result is seen as a foregone conclusion, have overwhelmingly rejected the Vance-Owen peace plan.

Russian efforts on Bosnia received a setback Monday when the United States made clear it would not attend a meeting of U.N. Security Council foreign ministers planned by Russia to discuss the future of peacekeeping operation in Bosnia.

Diplomats said the snub reflected disunity among Security Council members over what to do about Bosnia and they forecast

Russia would cancel the session.

France appealed to the United States and Russia to send troops to Bosnia to help protect Muslims in U.N.-declared "safe areas."

"We wish that the big powers come to relieve our efforts. I think especially of Russians and Americans," Foreign Minister Alain Juppe told the newspaper Le Figaro.

"It is the responsibility of all those who want to assume responsibilities in European Security."

France has proposed increasing the 9,000 U.N. peacekeeping forces in Bosnia to 40,000 to protect Sarajevo and six other largely Muslim enclaves designated safe areas.

In Belgrade, the U.N. refugee agency said aid convoys carrying desperately needed food were on their way to Muslim-held areas in Bosnia Tuesday after Serb forces had held them up for several days.

The convoys were bound for Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde and the capital Sarajevo — all declared "safe areas" by the U.N. this month — following an accord between the Bosnian Serb army and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) officials.

UNHCR spokeswoman Lyndal Sachs said: "People in these areas are very vulnerable because they have small stocks of food. Without these convoys there would be a quick slide into suffering."

Russian court postpones coup trial

MOSCOW (AP) — A court Tuesday indefinitely suspended the treason trial of the alleged masterminds of the August 1991 Soviet coup, agreeing with the defendants that Russia's chief prosecutor was biased.

Families of the 12 defendants smiled and burst into applause when presiding Judge Anatoly Ukolov read the decision. The defendants themselves, however, showed little reaction.

The three judges said they would formally ask the Supreme Soviet legislature to consider the "serious violations" by Prosecutor-General Valentin Stepankov and his deputy, Yevgeny Lisov, who together wrote a book about the coup, Kremlin Plot. Mr. Ukolov said the judges would ask the Supreme Soviet to consider how the independence of the prosecution team could be

guaranteed. Mr. Stepankov and Mr. Lisov are not participating directly in the trial and the nine prosecutors handling the trial have said they are acting independently.

But defence lawyers argued that the prosecutors' careers depend on their boss, Mr. Stepankov.

"The very title of the book shows that the prosecutor-general has an opinion on the case and is not objective," said defence lawyer Alexei Gologanov. "It is a very crude infringement on the rights of the accused."

The trial is now indefinitely postponed until the Supreme Soviet considers what to do. The judges left open the possibility that the trial could resume, perhaps with new prosecutors.

The three judges did not directly call for the ouster of Mr.

Stepankov and Mr. Lisov, but that would seem to be the clear implication of the decision.

The trial began on April 14 in the military branch of Russia's Supreme Court but was suspended two days later because of the illness of defendant Alexander Tizyakov, a former leader of the Soviet military-industrial complex.

The defendants are charged with treason in the botched coup that briefly ousted Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and led to the breakup of the Soviet Union. If convicted, they could be sentenced to death.

Among the other defendants are former Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, Defence Minister Dmitry Yazov, Vice President Gennady Yanayev and KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov.

Seoul police battle students on crackdown anniversary

SEOUL (AP) — Riot police battled thousands of students Tuesday to block them from marching to the homes of two former presidents to demand a new investigation of a bloody military crackdown.

The hand-to-hand combat that raged for more than an hour was the most violent student-police confrontation in Seoul since President Kim Young-Sam took office in February. At least two dozen students were injured, some seriously. The number of police injuries and arrests was not immediately available.

Students protested to mark the anniversary of the 1980 crackdown in southern Kwangju City and to demand that former Presidents Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo be punished. The students said they ordered soldiers to shoot civilians. Both former presidents have denied direct involvement.

"Punish Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Woo — main culprits of the Kwangju massacre," more than 4,000 students shouted as they marched from the main gate

at Seoul's Yonsei University. As about 1,000 riot police moved in to block the march, fighting broke out. Students kicked and punched, and police pummeled students with clubs and shields.

About 200 students pounded their way through police lines using steel bars and raced to the nearby residential area where the former presidents both have homes, not far from each other. Police fired volleys of tear-gas to drive other students back.

At nightfall, about 1,500 students were in a standoff with more than 1,000 riot police backed by armoured multiple tear-gas launchers. The confrontation was in an area roughly 300 metres from the two houses.

An estimated 11,000 riot police were deployed in Seoul, to guard the homes of the two former presidents, U.S. installations including the U.S. embassy, and government buildings.

Mr. Chun, helped by Mr. Roh and other generals, seized power in a coup in December 1979.

Rebel strike call cripples Peruvian public transport

LIMA, Peru (AP) — The few Peruvians who headed to work Monday traveled on trucks, bicycles, and tricycle taxis as a rebel-called "armed strike" crippled public transport and shut down businesses in the heart of the capital.

Shining Path rebels called the strike in Lima to mark the 13th anniversary of the start of the guerrilla war which has left more than 25,000 people dead.

It appeared to have more impact than any strike in recent years. An estimated 80 per cent of the stores in downtown Lima, where the government palace is located, were closed at midday, including a popular street market.

Downtown merchants had ignored previous strike calls from the rebels.

"They handed out pamphlets on every corner Sunday warning the street vendors not to open their stalls," said downtown resident Bertha Jimenez.

Rebels set off a car bomb at a fish market and burned a taxi early Monday at the start of the three-day strike. Four rebels and three civilians died in weekend attacks intended to intimidate Peruvians into staying home. The army patrolled the streets

Monday in armoured troop carriers, but concentrated its forces in upper-class districts previously hit by car bombs. There was little military presence in the dusty shantytowns that ring this rundown, overcrowded city of 7 million, where rebel presence is strong.

In Huaycan, a shantytown on a barren mountainside 20 kilometres east of downtown Lima, shopkeeper Ricardo Flores said few bus drivers dared to enter the area Monday.

"They are afraid they will burn their vehicles," he said. Many of Huaycan's 85,000 inhabitants are refugees from the fighting in the countryside.

Mr. Flores said the second night he opened his store a woman and two men armed with pistols appeared at his door to demand a "war contribution." He ended up giving them most of his rice, oil and other food staples.

"I did not dare to disobey them," he said.

His words clashed with the view expressed by President Alberto Fujimori, who told reporters touring Lima with him Monday that Peruvians no longer feared the Shining Path.

Specialists to probe Cuba's blindness epidemic

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A mysterious affliction that has caused total or partial blindness in thousands of Cubans appears to be spreading. Some blame food shortages or pesticides, and international specialists are investigating.

Cases have been documented across the island, which is reeling from a severe food shortage that the government blames on the U.S. trade embargo, the withdrawal of Soviet Bloc support and bad weather.

Two teams of specialists were recently sent to examine the affliction.

And last week, President Fidel Castro visited a hospital in eastern Cuba to check on the outbreak. The 1,000-bed facility in Santiago had been turned over completely for the treatment of the affliction.

One of the patients there was Magda Muniz Estrada, 20, who said the symptoms began with a pain in one eye that progressively got worse.

"It felt like there was a mosquito that would not let me see things well or make out the clothing of people, or colours," she told the Spanish newspaper El Pais. "I felt tired, with pain in my legs and cramps."

She didn't look underfed, the paper said. But even in agricultural Santiago, not prone to the distribution problems of Havana, food is hard to get.

The U.N. World Health Organisation (WHO) and affiliated Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), based in Washington, sent four specialists. An American organisation, Orbis, sent three.

Cuban Deputy Health Minister Jorge Antelo Perez told a WHO meeting in Geneva this month that Cuban doctors fear the affliction involves the nervous system. He said doctors have found no parallels in medical literature.

Mr. Perez said nearly 26,000 cases of the disease have been diagnosed so far.

PAHO spokesman Dan Epstein said in a telephone interview that the specialists would remain for a week meeting with Cuban counterparts.

Sri Lanka ruling party wins 4 of 7 councils in election

COLOMBO (AP) — The governing party lost control of Colombo's provincial council Tuesday but won four of six other provinces in the first balloting since the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

The governing United National Party (UNP) claimed the results were a victory, but opposition parties polled stronger than expected.

The opposition boycotted the 1988 election that set up the councils, and Mr. Premadasa's party ruled them all unopposed.

A final count showed the United National Party won a majority in four councils, a plurality in two and narrowly lost the largest council in the western province, where the capital is located. If opposition parties form a coalition, they could take control of two councils where the governing UNP only won a plurality.

"This is a great victory for the UNP," said the party's assistant secretary, Gamini Athukorale. "We have won most of the rural areas. This endorses the government's present policies and gives us a clear mandate to go on."

The election was the first since the assassinations of Mr. Premadasa on May 1 and of a top opposition leader, Lalith Athulathumudi, on April 23.

Dharmasiri Senanayake, general-secretary of the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party, urged the nation's opposition groups to overcome their differences, form a coalition and take control of the two councils where the governing party only won a plurality.

"We had a common understanding during the campaign. Now we have to sit down and discuss forming a coalition," he said.

Following Mr. Premadasa's assassination, parliament elected his prime minister, Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, as his successor.

Everything that could go wrong, did — IISS

LONDON (AFP) — In the past year the world has suffered a period of disillusionment and upheaval in which "almost everything that could go wrong did go wrong," a London think tank said Wednesday.

In its annual Strategic Survey of the World, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) found that on the whole, multilateral cooperation set the pace but nationalist feelings worsened.

"Russia was in political and economic chaos...peace talks in the Middle East were in abeyance...peace accords in Angola and Cambodia were shredded...famine stalked much of Africa," said the IISS.

"Freedom encouraged by the collapse of Communist rule transmuted into freedom for ethnic nationalist demands to stir up wars of particular savagery and brutality," said the report.

It was "not wholly unexpected that the collapse of artificial political constructions like the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia gave rise to new peaks of ethnic nationalism," said IISS.

Less expected, however, was the "resurgence of nationalist feelings within Europe as parliaments and people were forced by the calendar to face the momentous decisions reflected in the Maastricht Treaty" on European Union, the survey found.

It said the drive for "political and security integration has slowed considerably, as politicians who had allowed their enthusiasm to race ahead of the feelings of the electorate were not accorded the degree of support they had expected."

That drive, warned the IISS, "is now in danger of petering out as nationalist concepts of economic and security protectionism return."

"Multilateral solutions to the world's ills, from the United Nations to the European Community to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), failed to come near the high hopes that had been invested in them," the IISS said.

Most foreboding, it said, was the "buffeting that multilateral solutions to international problems are taking from narrow

nationalist interests. "Many of the more rosy-hued hopes for multilateral approaches were indeed naive, but some of the projections were sounder and more realistic," said the survey, cautioning that an "interdependent world must not allow the failure of the best to drive out the promise of the good."

The IISS warned the U.N. that "continual failure is dangerous," that it "undermines the credibility of the organisation, particularly with regard to those who most need to feel respect for the world body."

By the end of 1992, the continuing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the "complete failure" of the U.N. operation in Somalia, resumption of civil war in Angola and the U.N.'s growing difficulties in Cambodia "had seriously deflated the sense of optimism with which the year had begun," it said.

The organisation's worldwide problems, said the IISS, were exacerbated by "continuing financial instability...a growing sense of frustration and uncertainty" within the Secretariat.

Part of the problem, said the IISS, was the way in which the U.N. responded in trouble spots.

The U.N. "now accepts that in a chaotic situation...the provision of very few peacekeepers with insufficient logistical supports, restrictive rules of engagement and a mandate that prevents them from acting, merely allows local aggressors to ride roughshod..."

Somalia, said the IISS, was a "salutary" lesson for the U.N. which sent in a peacekeeping force of 500 to deal with a country "where there was no peace to keep, no government to deal with, no police force or national army to support or on which to rely."

"In the midst of anarchy and freebooting, this U.N. force was supposed to help secure and deliver relief aid and to organise some return to normality..." said the survey.

The U.S.-led multinational force of 37,000 inserted in December "showed what needs to be done in comparable circumstances," it said.



New Zealand director Jane Campion (second from right) accompanied by actors Harvey Keitel (left), Holly Hunter (centre) and Sam Neill (right), arrives at the Festival Palace in Cannes for the presentation of her competition movie during the Cannes Film Festival (AFP photo)

The Piano screens to emotional ovation at Cannes Film Festival

CANNES, France (AP) — More than 2,500 people at the Cannes Film Festival gave an emotional standing ovation Monday to New Zealand director Jane Campion's *The Piano*, widely favoured to win this year's coveted golden palm award.

Guests who packed the Grand Theatre Lumiere gave director Campion and stars Holly Hunter and Harvey Keitel a seven-minute ovation with cries of "bravo" at the film's official premiere.

The Piano about a woman who leaves Scotland with her nine-year-old daughter and her piano for New Zealand in the late 19th century, is among the 23 films in competition for the Golden Palm at the annual cinema festival, and so far easily the critics' and audiences' favourite.

Ada, played by Hunter, is a mute woman who arrives in the remote New Zealand bush for an arranged marriage with Stewart (Sam Neill). But the union is loveless, and Ada finds solace in playing her piano which has found its way to the cabin of the mysterious, hermit-like George (Keitel).

George discovers comfort, then consuming desire, through Ada's visits but then shamefully catches himself bartering piano access for Ada's body.

An astonishing performance is

put in by the energetic Anna Paquin as Ada's daughter Flora, who communicates with her mother through a sign language only the two can understand.

"The acting was sensational and the story fabulous," said Nathalie Delin, a public relations worker who attended the black-tie gala. "For two hours, without dialogue, Holly Hunter transmitted so much through her looks and gestures."

"You can just feel the film was made by a woman," Miss Delin said. "There are emotions only a woman can understand. George never touched the piano, and that's how she realised he was a sensitive man."

Stephane Mirkine, whose father Yves and grandfather Leo were the official photo archivists of the Cannes Festival for 30 years, agreed that the touch of a woman director was unmistakable.

"I lived most of my life with only my mother, and I always felt I could understand what she was feeling," Miss Mirkine said. "You can communicate through touching, as Ada touched the piano keys."

Campion is one of four women directors taking part in the festival's main competition, a record in the festival's 46-year history. She

has already won one Golden Palm here, for her short film *Peel* in 1982. Her other feature films were *Sweetie* (1989) and *An Angel At My Table* (1990).

The Piano is a study of romantic impulse and how it is both heroic and destructive. Campion blends love, rage, hope, despair and vengeance in a mystic tale set in muddy yet beautiful bush land.

Also showing Monday was *Magnificat* by Pupi Avati, set in 10th-century Italy chronicling several people whose lives don't intersect but converge on a monastery during Easter week.

The screenings followed a weekend where the first Haitian and horror films were shown in competition.

Rosol Peck's *L'Homme Sur Les Quais* (The Man On The Quays) was a ground-level look at the Tonton Macoute reign of terror in Haiti under Papa Doc Duvalier, as seen through the eyes of a young girl.

Abel Ferrara's *Body Snatchers* was the second remake of *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* after Don Siegel's original in 1956 and Philip Kaufman's once-over in 1978. While tedious at times, the special effects are noteworthy, and Ferrara may have discovered a new Uma Thurman in teenager Gabrielle Anwar.

Italy arrests top Sicilian mafia fugitive

ROME (R) — Italian police Tuesday captured the mafia's highest-ranking fugitive, Benedetto Nino Santapaola, the head of its armed wing who took over the organisation after the arrest of his boss last January.

Police arrested Mr. Santapaola without firing a shot in a dawn raid on an unguarded farmhouse in eastern Sicily where the mafioso was sleeping with his wife. There was a pistol in the drawer of his bedside table, but did not try to reach it.

He was carrying a false document, but made no attempt to hide his identity. National Police Commissioner Vincenzo Parisi said that in keeping with the tradition of mafia bosses, Mr. Santapaola congratulated the men who captured him.

Mr. Santapaola, underworld boss of the eastern Sicilian city of Catania, was left in charge of cosa nostra after the arrest Salvatore "Totò" Riina, the mafia godfather from Corleone caught on January 15 after 23 years on the run.

He started out in racketeering in his hometown Catania and then graduated to drugs. Police considered Mr. Santapaola a key player in the heroin and cocaine trade, but he was best known as the leader of the cosa nostra's fiercest armed units.



Benedetto Santapaola

Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, who last week said Italy had to defeat the mafia if it wanted to regain international credibility, immediately thanked the police.

The latest arrest came as Italy prepared to commemorate the first anniversary of the murder of mafia-busting Judge Giovanni Falcone, whose death on May 23, 1992 marked a major turning point in the Italian state's battle against cosa nostra.

Judge Falcone, his wife and three bodyguards died when a huge bomb blew up a motorway as they were driving into Palermo.

It's almost as though we did it on purpose. We arrested him on the eve of the anniversary of that massacre," said Antonio Manganiello, who led the police raid on Mr. Santapaola's hideout.

Also Tuesday, police arrested a judge and several other people in early morning raids against organised crime in the Naples region, Italian GRI state radio reported.

Police detained Judge Alfonso Lamberti, currently suspended from his duties, during investigations based on testimony from turncoat Pasquale Galasso.

Mr. Galasso, a former member of the Camorra — the Naples' mafia — is cooperating with the police.

It is the first time a judge has been arrested in the wave of corruption arrests that have cut a swathe through Italian political life over the past 15 months.

Reports said a total of 13 arrest warrants had been issued in the latest raids for charges ranging from mafia association to corruption.

Meanwhile, Carlo De Benedetti, the latest top name embroiled in Italy's graft scandal, Tuesday angrily accused politicians of running an extortion racket and holding his Olivetti computer firm to ransom for over a decade.

Iglesias eyes Chinese pop market

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Spanish pop star Julio Iglesias pushed to the corners of his eyelids to make the point. "Why I'm so interested in China and Asia. That's because of my kids." He told a packed press conference here on the eve of his performance at the closing ceremony of the inaugural East Asian Games. "They are half Asian and half European. So my kids have eyes like this," the 49-year-old jet-set entertainer said. "But I'm not married any more." The potential racial slur was taken lightly by some 150 mostly Chinese reporters and photographers who asked for autographs and a song from the one-time football pro who is reportedly performing here for nothing. "For an artist like me after so many years, it's not the question about whether they pay or they don't pay," he said. "I want to see people." It was Iglesias' first visit to this populous port city, a fast-developing model of China's "socialist market economy." He has been to Peking a number of times since 1988 when he became the first foreign artist to perform live on China Central Television. The Guinness Book of World Records lists him as the singer who has sold the most albums worldwide — more than 160 million copies. China could be one of the few markets left to be tapped by Iglesias who, according to his publicist, has played 3,000 concerts and 400 television shows in 75 countries since 1968.

Hollywood trio open new restaurant

LONDON (AP) — Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bruce Willis opened their new Planet Hollywood restaurant in a bucketing downpour that drenched thousands of fans jamming the surrounding streets. A brief but torrential rain soaked the dedicated fans but did not dampen the welcome they gave the muscular trio when they arrived for a star-studded launch party at their new showbiz restaurant in London's Piccadilly Circus. Stallone nearly caused a riot when he went on an impromptu walkabout and had to be rescued by a bevy of burly minders and police. He returned to his position of safety behind security barriers as the crowd chanted "Rocky, Rocky" — the role that made him famous. Schwarzenegger arrived punching the air and shouting "welcome to Planet Hollywood." Willis turned up at the same time as an ambulance appeared to collect fans who had fainted. If the cheers had not drowned him out, the sirens would have. Willis, wearing a baseball cap and what appeared to be an undershirt, appeared with his wife, actress Demi Moore. The stars invited more than 200 of their showbiz pals for the opening night.

Actor Mel Gibson, wearing a powder blue jacket and black shirt and trousers, shook hands with people behind the security barriers as he was walking in — while the excitement approached pandemonium levels. He posed for photographs with a London policeman who seemed to be the envy of all the women in the street, several of whom fainted.

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First lady has a new hair style

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Suddenly, the main issue is the mane issue. First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has a new hairdo. She returned to Washington from a weekend trip to New York with her formerly shoulder-length hair cut to just below her ears. The new style is layered on the sides, slightly tousled and swept away from her face. The White House wasn't saying who wielded the shears. But the Washington Post said in Tuesday editions the first lady's new hairdo was the work of Frederic Fekkai, a New York-based Frenchman who charges \$275 a cut and counts among his clients actresses Maria Maples, Sigourney Weaver, Ellen Barkin, Meryl Streep and TV journalist Lesley Stahl.

Wild cabbages could clean up poisoned land

LONDON (AFP) — Wild cabbages may soon be used to help up Britain's abandoned industrial sites, after a successful two-year investigation into their powers of absorbing toxic sludge. The Guardian newspaper reported. Scientists from Sheffield University, central England, and from government experimental laboratories have found the plants can be more effective at neutralising metallic poisons than current detoxifying techniques. The trials, funded by the European Community and a U.S. chemical firm, showed the cabbages could adapt to poisons in the soil by absorbing them harmlessly into shoots and

Sports

Juventus finally find Platini's heir

MILAN (AP) — It took three years to realise it, but Juventus may have found its long-sought heir to Michel Platini.

Roberto Baggio, Italian soccer's most expensive transfer when he reluctantly joined the Turin team in 1990, has produced a streak of outstanding performances in recent months that has fans dreaming of a revival of the club's triumphant era with Platini in the 1980s.

Baggio's imaginative play this season has taken Juventus to this year's UEFA Cup final. He scored two goals in his team's 3-1 road victory in the first leg against German team Borussia Dortmund earlier this month and Juventus can seal the title Wednesday in the second-leg match at Turin.

The UEFA crown would signal a comeback of sorts for Juventus, Italy's most popular and once most successful team. The club has gone three years without a major title and hasn't won an Italian League championship in seven years.

French forward Platini, supported by a number of Italian internationals including World Cup star striker Paolo Rossi, was a key to two of La Juve's four league championships, plus its Champions Cup and Cupwinners Cup titles in the 1980s.

Now, with Baggio leading the charge, fans are looking for more titles in the 1990s.

"Baggio now has the black-and-white colours in his heart," he has become the team leader," said club President Giampiero Boniperti, who recently extended Baggio's contract through 1996. The player will reportedly receive about \$2.5 million a year.

Baggio, a crowd favourite when he played with Fiorentina, had initially opposed his transfer to Juventus at a record fee of about \$15 million.

His departure from Florence touched off riots by groups of Fiorentina fans and his declared love for his former team caused him the dislike of Juventus supporters. Baggio even refused to kick a penalty against Fiorentina during his first season in Turin.

This season Baggio, unfettered from tactical duties and left free to play the way he likes, exploded with 33 goals — 19 in league games, six in the UEFA Cup, three in the Italian Cup and six with the Italian national team. He scored all his team's goals in the UEFA Cup semifinal against powerful Paris St. Germain.

Such numbers have put Baggio in contention for Europe's biggest honour — the Golden Ball Trophy awarded every year to the best player on the continent.

"He's a player of great class, who can invent goals and beautiful moves," said AC Milan's Dutch star Marco Van Basten, three times voted as best European player. "He deserves the Golden Ball award."

Jordan leads Bulls to Eastern Conference finals

RICHFIELD (AP) — In a building where his heroics have become routine, Michael Jordan did it again Monday night.

He sank a remarkable fallaway jumper from the right side of the foul line at the buzzer, beating the Cleveland Cavaliers 103-101 and sending the Chicago Bulls to the Eastern Conference finals for the fifth straight time.

The victory was the Bulls' ninth consecutive in the playoffs, dating to last year's NBA finals. They swept Atlanta in three straight and Cleveland in four straight so far this season.

Jordan, still bothered by the sprained right wrist sustained last Thursday, scored 31 points on 11-of-24 shooting. He also grabbed nine rebounds.

With the score 101-101, the Bulls rebounded Craig Ehlo's missed shot and called time with 18.5 seconds left. They then got the ball to Jordan, guarded closely by Gerald Wilkins. As the final seconds ticked, Jordan — his back to Wilkins — wheeled and faded, letting go of a shot that nestled into the net as the buzzer sounded.

The shot was only a few feet away from the spot where he sank a 16-footer over Ehlo to beat Cleveland at the buzzer in a deciding first-round game in 1989. It also came on the same floor where Jordan scored a career-high 69 points in 1990.



Michael Jordan

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

World champion fails dope test Tyson gets thumbs-down

SOFLA (APF) — The women's world chess champion and Olympic silver medalist Tsvetanka Christova has failed a dope test. The Bulgarian Athletics Federation said Tuesday that both Christova, and another discus thrower, Stefania Simova, have failed an initial A test. The samples were taken during a visit to Bulgaria in late March by officials from the International Amateur Athletic Federation. Their second, or B, samples will be examined by the IAAF/Olympic sports laboratory in Cologne, at a date yet to be decided.

New squad formed to replace air crash victims

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) — The Football Association of Zambia has named a new national soccer squad after 18 key players were killed in an air crash last month, newspapers reported Monday. Denmark's Development Cooperation minister, Henne Degen, said in Copenhagen Friday that Denmark would pay expenses for the revamped 27-man squad to train there for six weeks. The Zambians were favourites for qualifying in the World Cup and the Africa Cup of nations. The Federation of International Football Associations has postponed Zambia's World Cup qualifiers for two months because of the crash. Eighteen players and several team officials died when the military cargo plane they were flying to a match in Senegal crashed into the sea off Libereville.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ice skater Dorothy Hamill and gymnast Mary Lou Retton are top of the sports pope in America — but boxer Mike Tyson got the thumbs-down. An opinion poll carried out by Sports Marketing Group found out that Retton, Olympic champion in 1984, headed the popularity stakes with 55 per cent, equal with 1976 champion Hamill. Basketball star Michael Jordan won 47 per cent of the votes and American football quarterback Joe Montana 44 — but Mike Tyson won the "thumbs-down" award with a third of the votes, followed by tennis player John McEnroe.

Knicks' Riley named Coach of the Year

NEW YORK (R) — Pat Riley, who guided the New York Knicks to the best record in the Eastern Conference at 60-22, has won the Red Auerbach Trophy as the NBA Coach of the Year for the 1992-93 season, the National Basketball Association announced Monday. Riley, who also won NBA coach of the year honours in 1990 with the Los Angeles Lakers, becomes the fifth coach ever to win the award twice. He edged Houston Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich by one vote in the closest balloting in the award's 31-year history.

Marseille remain cautious

PARIS (R) — Marseille, almost untouchable as they head towards a record fifth successive French League title, remained strangely cautious as they prepared for a decisive fortnight in which their main target is the European Cup. The French leaders romped to a 4-1 win over Lille Saturday, taking their lead to four points with just three games to go, but were reluctant to claim the title was in the bag.

With their attention beginning to shift towards their date in Munich with AC Milan May 26, Marseille players and officials were in no mood to count chickens before they hatch.

"We've opened up a gap and taken a club, drew trumps in one round and then called just one heart — the queen — before exiting with a spade. The best the defenders could do was take two spades, ending in the West hand. Since the lead of any suit other than a heart would give declarer a ruff-suit, West was forced to return the jack of hearts. Declarer played low from dummy and, had East followed, all the hearts would have been winners. When East showed out, declarer was able to win in hand with the ace and finesse the nine to bring home the suit. Observe that the endplay would have functioned in much the same way had it been East who held the long hearts.

On the pitch, however, his team are oozing confidence as they showed once more in an almost insolent demolition of Lille. Strikers Alan Boksic and Rudi Voller both scored and midfielder Franck Sauzeau grabbed another to sound a warning to their Italian opponents in Munich.

These three key players, have reached the closing stages of the season in splendid form and, with Milan patently struggling of late to find their peerless excellence, it would be rash to consider Marseille as outsiders for the European title.

Paris St. Germain dropped a point in a 1-1 draw in Bordeaux despite dominating the match impressively. But goalkeeper Bernard Lama blundered badly to hand the home side an equaliser.

Unable to pick up a back pass from a defender, he tried to dribble past Christophe Dugarry but lost the ball and suffered the indignity of seeing the Bordeaux forward score with a shot which went between his legs.

It was Lama's second major blunder in recent weeks. He failed to cut out a simple back pass in a World Cup qualifier in Paris last month, allowing Sweden to take the lead with a soft goal — though France recovered to win 2-1.

Seles stabbing casts shadow over French Open

PARIS (AFP) — This year's French Open will certainly go down in history — but not for the reasons the organisers would have liked.

Last month's on-court stabbing of Monica Seles has ensured that the first Grand Slam tournament to take place in its aftermath will be cloaked by an unprecedented degree of security.

Long delays and frayed Parisian nerves seem inevitable following the decision to introduce body searches for every spectator throughout the two-week tournament.

The loss of the world number one is a major blow for the organisers.

It was here, in 1989, that Seles first granted her way onto the world stage by reaching the semi-finals and her absence will inevitably devalue the achievements of whoever succeeds her as champion.

That 1989 semi-final when she lost to Steffi Graf in three sets, was the last time Seles lost on the red clay at Roland Garros and 1993 should have been the year she became the first woman to win four straight French Open titles.

But now, instead of preparing a re-run of last year's classic final against Graf, when she won 18-8 in the final set, Seles will be watching the tournament on television, knowing that if her biggest rival wins, she could also lose her number one ranking.

The odds on a Graf victory must be fairly short. Her defeat of Gabriela Sabatini in the final of the German Open Sunday showed how limited the competition is for her and Seles is at the top of the women's game.

Despite a string of unforced errors from the German, Sabatini was unable to capitalise and has now gone without a tournament win since last year's Italian Open.

With Martina Navratilova again skipping the French to concentrate on her Wimbledon preparations, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario looks like the only serious opponent standing between Graf and a third French title.

Sanchez has had a good season. She has won four tournaments, beating Graf in finals at both Key Biscayne and Hamburg. In ambition she knows that on clay her powers of retrieval can frustrate Graf's hitting power as she did when she beat German in the 1989 final.

An even bigger obstacle for Graf could be her own state of mind.

Seles' attacker told police he had wanted to help Graf regain the number one spot and after her disappointing display against Sabatini she admitted the upsetting affair had left her with concentration problems.

"Physically, I am definitely ready for the French," she said. "But mentally I'm not as confident as I should be. I'm doubting myself and if I make a few errors I start thinking that I'm not playing well, instead of concentrating."

While Graf struggles to pull her psyche together, Jim Courier should have no confidence problems as he bids for a third consecutive men's title.

Only Bjorn Borg, who won



Monica Seles tells reporters about her condition after being stabbed while playing in the Hamburg Women's Tournament last month



Steffi Graf

four of his six titles on the trot between 1978 and 81, has achieved that before and Courier's displacement from the top of the rankings earlier this year suggested a more open tournament than last year, when the American dropped one set in seven matches.

But in Rome last week Courier looked to be back to his best as he scythed his way through a top-quality field to win the Italian Open.

"They say Agassi hits the ball hard but compared to Jim he is like a choir boy," said Fabrice Santoro, one of the bemused unfavourable on the receiving end of Courier's strong-arm style.

On current form, Courier's most serious rival in Paris will be Stefan Edberg. The Swede, who won in Madrid last month, has devoted more time than ever before to his preparation on clay and believes he is capable of winning the only Grand Slam title he has yet to claim.

A decision to miss the early part of the European clay court season and head for Asia paid off spectacularly for Pete Sampras. He won three tournaments and took full advantage of Courier's stumbles to take over as number one.

But on clay the American has yet to beat anybody in the top ten. His best performance at Roland Garros was a quarter-final place last year and, after so little preparation on the surface, he doesn't look a good bet to go further this time.

Much the same can be said for

Women skiers do not like Lillehammer course

NEW YORK (AP) — Imagine holding the Masters at the neighbourhood par-3, or the Indy 500 in the supermarket parking lot. That's how most of the world's best women skiers feel about staging the Olympic downhill on the flat, featureless Hafjell Course near Lillehammer, Norway next February.

They are joined in their dislike for the course by the International Ski Federation (FIS), which Monday repeated its support of the skiers in calling for the women's race to be moved further north, to the demanding men's course at Kvitfjell.

Among the most outspoken of the women is the one with arguably the biggest stake in the race — defending gold medalist Kerrin Lee-Granter. She won her title at Menbel, France on the "Roc Du Fer" — the iron face — the Bernhard Russi-designed course that posed the stiffest challenge ever faced by women.

As far as the racers were concerned, there was no going back. They'd proven they could handle a course designed by a men's Olympic champion.

That's why Lee-Granter and the rest were so disappointed when they saw Hafjell.

"When you drive into town you couldn't even see a mountain," she said of her first look at the course. And things got no better after that.

The women got together and called on organisers to move the women's downhill to Kvitfjell, a twisting, turning, high-speed piece of real estate on which only a top downhill could excel.

The Lillehammer organisers said they would take the suggestion under advisement, but two weeks ago announced they would keep the race at Hafjell, although they would try to beef it up.

In stating their intention to keep the Olympic race at Hafjell, organisers have the backing of the International Olympic Committee. But the matter may not be closed. The FIS is the agency charged with conducting the Olympic alpine competition, and so it's weight, if brought to bear, can be a considerable influence.

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GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAN HACH

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BRIDGE A LA GIPSY ROSE

Both vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH

♠ 10 9

♥ K 8 6 4

♦ A K J 8 7 4

♣ Q

WEST

♠ K 8 5 2

♥ J 10 8 3

♦ 9 8

♣ 9 5 4 2

EAST

♠ A Q 8 7 3

♥ 7

♦ A

♣ K J 10 7 6 3

SOUTH

♠ J 4

♥ A Q 8 2

♦ Q 10 9 8 2

♣ A 8

The bidding:

East South West North

1 ♠ 1 ♣ Pass 5 ♣

Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

There is a dull definition of a pessimist being someone who has spent some time with an optimist.

Be that as it may, there's no doubt that the bridge player who fears the worst is likely to be the one who prepares best to combat bad breaks.

We like North's decision to bounce the auction all the way to five diamonds. The North hand actually detracts from the defensive prospects of North-South's combined holding, while a few key cards in partner's hand could easily produce game.

West led a club and, for those who view life through rose-colored spectacles, everything was easy. Declarer won in hand, drew trumps and started on hearts. Unfortunately, that suit failed to break, so declarer had to concede two made tricks and a heart for down one.

When this hand was dealt in a match at the European Mixed Teams Championship, Mariamne Sarf of France was aware that a 4-1 heart split could present a problem.

She found a textbook method to protect against that possibility.

After winning the ace of clubs, Sarf ruffed a club, drew trumps in one round and then called just one heart — the queen — before exiting with a spade. The best the defenders could do was take two spades, ending in the West hand. Since the lead of any suit other than a heart would give declarer a ruff-suit, West was forced to return the jack of hearts. Declarer played low from dummy and, had East followed, all the hearts would have been winners. When East showed out, declarer was able to win in hand with the ace and finesse the nine to bring home the suit. Observe that the endplay would have functioned in much the same way had it been East who held the long hearts.

On the pitch, however, his

CONCORD
DOC HOLLYWOOD
Shows: 3:15, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

PLAZA
PREDATOR '2'
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PHILADELPHIA
Desperately Seeking Suzan
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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Sudan peace talks collapse

ABUJA (AFP) — Sudanese peace talks collapsed here on Tuesday after southern rebels challenged the military junta in Khartoum to hold a referendum offering a choice between national unity or Islamic law.

A Sudanese government spokesman said the negotiations had been adjourned until June 19.

Nigerian chief mediator Tunji Olanju said the Khartoum team and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had been unable to reach agreement on any joint statement and would consult their respective leaderships.

Late Monday, the SPLA called on the junta to give northerners in Africa's war-torn, largest nation a choice between strict Sharia law or the national unity of the country.

Colonel John Garang's SPLA has fought governments in Khartoum for a decade for a secular state in Sudan, where most southerners are animists or Christians.

Mr. Olanju said that a joint statement could not be issued because of disagreements, particularly over power-sharing arrangements during a transitional period put to the rival delegations.

He gave no date for the resumption of talks, but Khartoum's representative said it would be June 19 as he came out of the conference room.

A main sticking point was adopting by the state of Sharia law, which provided for punishments such as the amputation of thieves' hands and the stoning to death of adulterers.

The SPLA had accused the government of "intransigence" over Sharia, but Khartoum's spokesman, Ali Al Haj Mohammad, said Tuesday the rebels refused to sign the final statement and were manipulated to that end.

Before the talks broke down, Col. Garang himself unexpectedly arrived here Monday at the behest of the Nigerians, but an authoritative SPLA source said his presence would have "no effect" on the negotiations.

The only point where consensus was reached was on the principle of a ceasefire commission, but Khartoum objected to an SPLA proposal that it include observers from Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, the European Community and the United States.

Before the talks began on April 26, the SPLA declared a unilateral ceasefire while Sudanese leader General Omar Al Bashir renewed an amnesty offer to all rebels who laid down their arms.

SPLA spokesman, Nihal Deng Nihal had said the warring sides would Tuesday produce a statement listing their points of disagreement, but in the event the rebels produced their own.

Apart from the main bones of contention, the SPLA said there was no accord on foreign policy, international representation, the judicial system, the banking system and exchange rate control, and international trade.

The SPLA wanted missionary activity placed under the jurisdiction of Sudan's different states, but Khartoum called for federal control.

International observers estimate that the war and famine have claimed at least 400,000 lives, while hundreds of thousands of people face starvation and have been displaced.

The SPLA itself has been weakened by a split between the mainstream faction and a coalition of splinter groups, which were not represented in Abuja at Col. Garang's insistence.

Christopher: Bosnia is European responsibility

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, saying U.S. proposals had been rejected, Tuesday put the responsibility of solving the Bosnian crisis squarely on Europe.

"At heart this is a European problem," Mr. Christopher said in congressional testimony. He called the ethnic slaughter in Bosnia "a problem from hell."

Mr. Christopher emphasized: "We will not act alone in taking actions in the former Yugoslavia."

But he told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee: "We will do what we can in concert with our allies and friends to respond to the violence and contain the conflict."

Continuing the cautious approach to the possibility of U.S. intervention in the Balkans, Mr. Christopher said policy must follow a careful determination of U.S. interests.

"We must be tough but we also must try to be wise," he said.

Mr. Christopher said "we have not given up on what we think is the soundest approach." Lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia Muslims, and temporary "compensatory air action" to allow the Muslims to meet their Serbian foes on "a level playing field." He conceded this proposal had been rebuffed during his trip to Europe two weeks ago.

"Our allies in Europe are not willing to follow this course at the present time," he said.

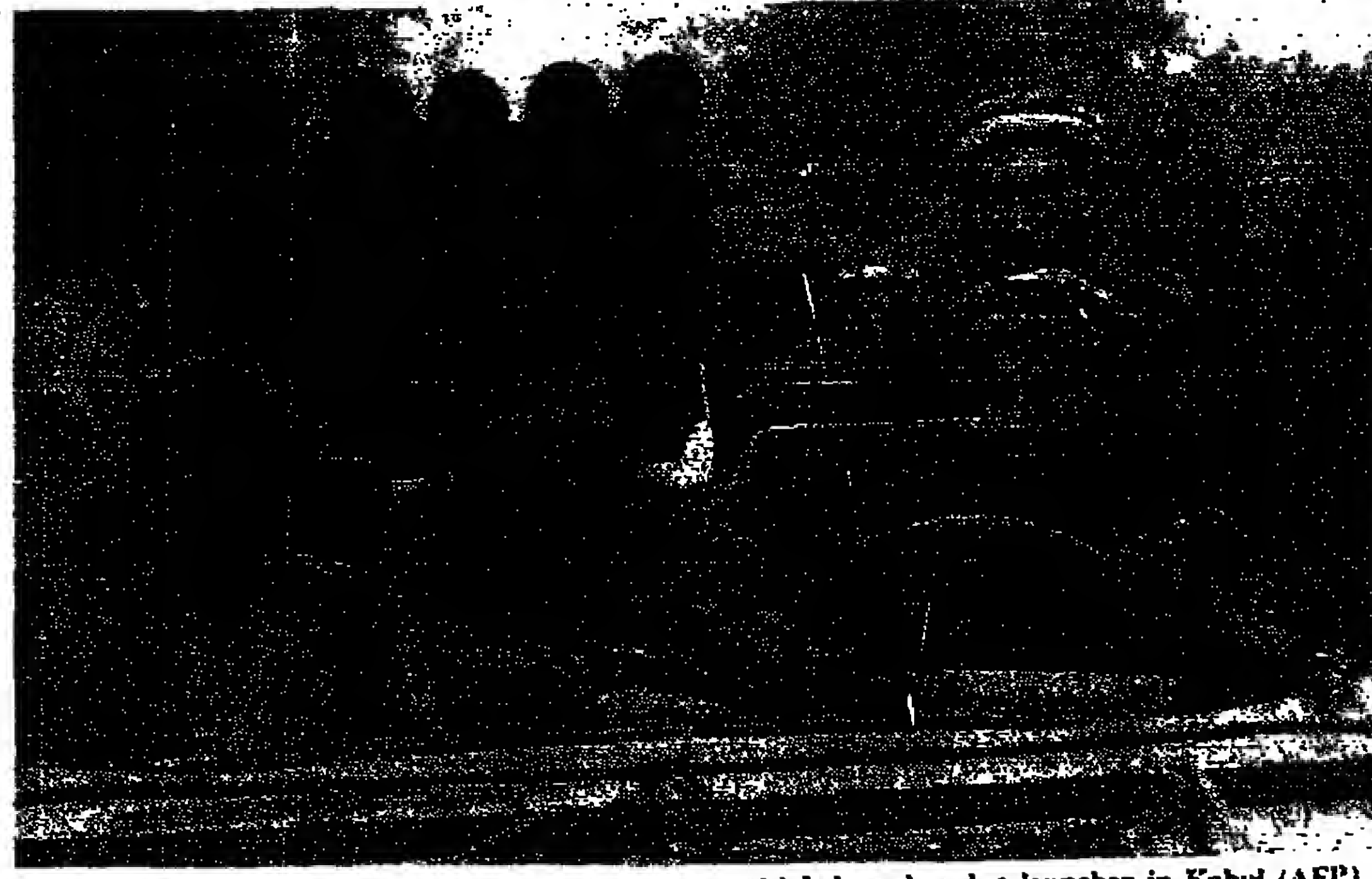
Mr. Christopher said he opposed a Russian-proposed meeting Friday of the U.N. Security Council on the peace plan developed by diplomats Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen because Bosnian Serbs have rejected the plan (see page 8).

The U.N. meeting has been postponed, he said.

"At least the United States is not prepared to go ahead with implementation of a plan ... to which one party is in strong disagreement," he said.

The only way to force (the Vance-Owen plan) on the Bosnian Serbs is with troops on the ground," he said.

Mr. Christopher said the United States was prepared to commit military forces to implement a peace settlement "entered into consensually and in good faith by the parties."



Hezb-e-Islami fighters man a vehicle mounted with a multiple-barrel rocket launcher in Kabul (AFP)

Battle for Kabul intensified

KABUL (Agencies) — Dozens of casualties swamped Kabul's already crowded hospitals as government troops and their guerrilla foes fought to break a stalemate in the Afghan capital Tuesday.

Government jets made at least eight bombing runs on positions of hardline guerrilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in southern Kabul as his rockets pounded the city.

Fierce rocket and artillery fire was concentrated around a strategic road junction near the centre of the battered capital where troops loyal to the coalition government were fighting off an offensive by their opponents.

Neither side had made advanced, witnesses said.

Jets screaming down toward the headquarters of Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami party a few kilometres south of Kabul sent people in the suburbs fleeing into bunkers.

Anti-aircraft batteries manned by Mr. Hekmatyar's allies, the Shi'ite Hezb-e-Wahdat, opened

fire as the planes streaked overhead.

"Get the civilians into the bunkers," shouted one commander at the headquarters of Wahdat leader Abdul Ali Mazari.

Another commander ordered his men to move a tank away from a bunker entrance saying that it made an easy target.

"These planes are injuring civilians," said Hezb-e-Islami commander Zulmai. "They fly high to avoid our fire and so they can't target our artillery properly."

Peres offers India anti-extremism help

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres offered to help India in the fight against extremism on the final day of a groundbreaking visit he called the opening chapter of their relationship.

Mr. Peres inked pacts on cultural exchanges and tourism to add to agreements providing for economic cooperation and regular consultations between the two foreign offices on another hectic day of meetings with Indian leaders.

He said his visit had served as a "most happy and promising" opening chapter for relations between the two countries, which established full diplomatic ties in January 1992 ending four decades of hostility.

Relations between India, a staunch supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and Israel were, however, mutually exclusive of their ties with Arab states and the PLO. Mr. Peres told a news conference.

"We would like a good relationship with India. We would also like to see India have the best of relations with Arab countries," he said. "We are ourselves seeking a good relationship with Arab states."

The Israeli foreign minister, whose visit marked the highest level contact between India and Israel since relations were upgraded, indicated readiness to help India fight extremism.

"Violence and terror has an international context," he said when asked about possible cooperation in combating violence following the March 12 bombings in Bombay which killed more than 300 people.

"It is normal for civilised countries to come together to fight terror and violence," he said but did not spell out what shape such cooperation, which official sources said figured prominently at his talks with Indian officials, could take.

India has blamed Pakistan's military intelligence of plotting the bombings which it says were carried out by Muslim members of the Bombay underworld. It says six key suspects have fled to the Pakistani port city of Karachi.

Mr. Peres said India's Civil Aviation Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad questioned him about the security measures adopted by Israel's national airline, El Al.

"They want to learn from our experience," Mr. Peres said after signing cooperation agreements on aviation and tourism.

Four planes of Indian Airlines, the domestic carrier, have been hijacked so far this year. One plane was rescued by commandos who killed the armed hijacker.

The hijackers of the other three planes proved to be unarmed and surrendered after negotiations.

India also is concerned about the insurrection in its northern province Kashmir, which the Indians describe as a terrorist war supported by Pakistan.

Israeli officials said Mr. Peres asked India to help establish ties with two of India's closest neighbours, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

Israel had a mission in Sri Lanka from 1984 that included military advisers to the Sri Lankan army fighting Tamil secessionist guerrillas. But the Israeli office was ordered closed in 1990 after complaints from the Arab countries.

Bhutan, a feudalistic Himalayan kingdom of 600,000 people, is closely tied with India and has full relations with few other countries.

Environment talks in Tokyo next week

TOKYO (AFP) — The third meeting of the environmental commission working as part of the multilateral peace talks on the Middle East will be held here next week, Japan's foreign ministry said Tuesday.

Invited to the talks Monday and Tuesday are some 40 countries, most notably those involved directly in the peace process — Israel and the Arab countries, the United States, Russia and the European Community.

The environmental meeting will be the third chaired by Japan since the commission was formed in January 1992, at the same time as other peace talks commissions on economic development, disarmament, water and refugees in the troubled region.

It was also announced by the Japanese Foreign Ministry that a top official of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Nabil Shaath, an advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, would be present as the "de facto" head of the Palestinian delegation at the peace talks.

His second will be Saeb Erakat, a Palestinian from the occupied territories.

Israel refuses to negotiate directly with the PLO, so the PLO official will have to take a sideline role in the formal talks, making way for Dr. Erakat.

The same practice was followed at the last environmental meeting here one year ago.

Among the subjects on the agenda are environmental management, waste treatment and marine pollution, a Japanese official said.

Mr. Arafat said in Vienna Monday that aborted talks between the Palestinians and Israel on water resources — a vital factor in the current multilateral negotiations — will resume in June.

He told journalists at the talks would reconvene in Vienna from June 7 to 9.

Commenting on the recent inconclusive Middle East peace talks in Washington, Mr. Arafat expressed disappointment that hopes of a positive outcome had not realised.

He welcomed American involvement in the discussions and said that the PLO would pursue

negotiations with the United States after the next meeting of foreign ministers of the frontline Arab states.

Mr. Arafat gave no details of the time or place of that meeting. During his two-day stay in Austria was to seek Austrian support for the PLO's position in the peace talks in meetings with Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, President Thomas Klestil, Foreign Minister Alois Mock and Parliament Speaker Heinz Fischer.

The previous round of discussions on the water supply took place in Geneva in April 1992.

They were broken off in acrimony after the PLO accused Israel of refusing to recognise the water rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Islamic front, in rare meeting, states its case to U.S. ambassador

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The political front of Jordan's mainstream Islamic movement Tuesday revealed that it held recently an unprecedented meeting with the American ambassador in Amman, during which it reaffirmed its known positions against the Arab-Israeli peace process and U.S. policies in the Middle East.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF), founded as a political party by members of the Muslim Brotherhood last year, also said it voiced its opposition to any unilateral move to amend Jordan's Election Law and that it believes in the "gradual and wise" implementation of Islamic law in the Kingdom.

An IAF press statement said the May 10 meeting between Ambassador Roger Harrison and IAF officials headed by Secretary-General Ishaq Al Farhan was sought by the American side.

Peter Kovach, the embassy spokesman, confirmed the meeting and described it as routine and part of his mission's continuing contacts with Jordanian political parties.

"It is normal for diplomats to keep in touch with leaders of political parties," Mr. Kovach said. Prior to the May 10 meeting, he told the Jordan Times,

"American diplomats have had contacts with members of the Islamic Action Front as well as other political parties." The ambassador himself, however, had not personally taken part in direct meetings with the Islamists before, due mainly to their reluctance to meet with him, according to information available to the Jordan Times.

American diplomats have been meeting leaders of Islamic movements in the Arab World and elsewhere in what the State Department describes as an effort to understand "political Islam." American diplomats have had contacts with the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, before the administration formally announced an end to meetings with Hamas officials three months ago.

Mr. Kovach would not comment on what was discussed during the meeting between Ambassador Harrison and IAF leaders. Nor would he say how accurate was the IAF's version of the discussions.

But other sources close to the talks said the IAF's statement was "a fairly accurate summary" of what was discussed.

The IAF statement had a preamble which sought to explain why the front held the

meeting with the U.S. ambassador.

The front wanted to "explain its position on political issues that have become issues of international concern," the statement said, and quoted Dr. Farhan as telling the ambassador that "we prefer that others hear from us directly rather than the distorted versions of the Zionist and Western media."

During the meeting, held at the IAF office in Abdali and attended by IAF Assistant Secretary-General Abdullah Akayleh and Administrative Committee chief Hamzeh Mansour, the ambassador explained that his visit was a courtesy call and not different from similar visits to other political parties in Jordan to discuss various political issues, and the peace process, the statement said.

The statement quoted Dr. Farhan as saying that the IAF was a party which operates in conformity with the Jordanian Constitution and the Political Parties Law of 1992.

Dr. Farhan sought an explanation on what President Bill Clinton meant in comments he made when he received the credentials of the new Jordanian ambassador in Washington, Dr. Fayez Tarawneh, and whether his words included a reference to the

IAF.

"The ambassador denied (that there was any reference to the Islamists' programme in President Clinton's comments) but his explanation was not convincing," the IAF statement said.

In his comments, made April 14, Mr. Clinton paid tribute to Jordan's democratisation process and said: "Your progress has been even more noteworthy considering the great difficulties facing Jordan, and the desire of some to use the very instruments of democratisation to gain and keep power for themselves."

"Blockade of Aqaba" Dr. Farhan expressed "the anger of the Jordanian people against the blockade at Aqaba" — imposed by the U.S.-led international enforcers of the embargo against Iraq — and particularly referred to the interception and diversion in April of a ship carrying newspaper for Jordan causing problems for the Jordanian press.

The diversion of the ship was an "aggressive action that infringes upon Jordan's sovereignty and democratic march since the press is one of the pillars of democracy which the U.S. asserts it seeks to protect," Dr. Farhan said, according to the IAF statement.

The ambassador denied any such motives behind the interception and said the intercepted ship was only one of the three such vessels, but "the explanation was below the minimum level of reason," the front's statement said.

Islam and the West

Dr. Farhan "voiced the IAF's opposition to the American police which is biased in favour of the Israeli enemy, the state of Israel, and cooperation with (that state) against what they call Islamic fundamentalism."

The IAF leader accused the U.S. of "dealing with the Islamic renaissance as a substitute enemy after the demise of communism and the Soviet Union," the statement said.

"This animosity will not serve the cause of coexistence or peace in the world," Dr. Farhan said. "And the consequences will not be confined to the Arab World."

He called upon the U.S. to "accept the reality of Muslims, who represent one-fifth of the world population with a rich cultural depth," according to the statement.

Dr. Farhan, in an implicit reference to Egypt and Algeria

which are fighting militant Islamists, "condemned the American support for some Arab regimes which are exercising terrorism against their own peoples."

Jordanian politics

Replying to a question asked by the ambassador on links between the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF, Dr. Farhan said that the front was "financially, politically and administratively independent of the Brotherhood."

"Many Muslim Brotherhood members are also members of the front but it is their private individual capacity," Dr. Farhan said. "The front welcomes anyone who believes Islam is the solution," he told the ambassador, according to the IAF statement.

Asked by the ambassador whether the front was seeking to implement Sharia, Dr. Farhan was quoted as saying that a "wise and gradual" introduction of Islamic law was an objective, "but the front will ensure that all political trends in the country share in shouldering national responsibilities."

Dr. Farhan rejected any unilateral government amendment to the Election Law. "The Lower House's term has not officially ended and it is the

proper forum for discussing or amending any law. We will not accept any law that bypasses Parliament, the representative of the people of Jordan."

Peace process

Dr. Farhan reiterated the Islamists' rejection of the American-backed Arab-Israeli negotiations saying the process "aims at depriving the Palestinians of 90 per cent of their land for the benefit of the Jews."

"We see the U.S. as a full partner of Israel and (Israel's) expansionism," said Dr. Farhan, whose party advocates the elimination of the state of Israel.

"In our view, the solution to the Palestinian problem is the return of all Jews (in Israel) to where they came from — the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," Dr. Farhan said. "Or the U.S. should absorb them in its soil," according to the press statement.

"Only then, the people of Palestine, with all their different beliefs, will be able to exercise their right to self-determination," said Dr. Farhan.

He said: "No dealings with thieves who stole our land, dispersed our people and seized our resources with the help of Western colonial powers."

COLUMN I

Forbes names Weinberger chairman

NEW YORK (AFP) — Forbes magazine named former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger chairman. The post had been vacant since the magazine's billionaire owner, Malcolm Forbes, died in 1990. Until now, Mr. Weinberger was publisher of the business magazine. He will be replaced by associate publisher Jeffrey Cunningham. "Weinberger's election and Cunningham's promotion recognise the major roles the two men have played in strengthening the magazine and its corporate parent," said Malcolm Forbes, son of the late chairman. Mr. Weinberger played a key role in broadening Forbes' position abroad, said Mr. Forbes, president and chief executive officer of the 750,000-circulation magazine.

2 teens held after taking class hostage, firing at principal

PRINCETON, W. VA. (AP) — Two students smuggled guns and military rations into their high school, took more than a dozen classmates and a teacher hostage and shot at the principal before being arrested, officials said. No one was hurt in the two-hour ordeal. The motive wasn't clear. The main gunman, a 15-year-old carrying a revolver, a handgun and a sawed-off shotgun, was tackled by another student as he put a gun in his pocket. Superintendent Debbie Akers said. He was taken into custody and charged with delinquency stemming from kidnapping and shooting in public, police said. The accomplice, who carried a pistol, fled after the shot was fired and also was arrested. He was identified as Kevin Larose, 18, of Princeton, and he was charged with kidnapping, said Police Lt. Casey Martin. The students arrived late for a final-period biology class at Princeton High School, closed the door behind them and took out the guns," Mr. Akers said. The main gunman, a 15-year-old, summoned Principal George Keatley over the public address system to discuss his demands, which included \$2 million to \$3 million, more weapons and hand grenades, Lt. Martin said.

Mother Teresa's health improving

ROME (AFP) — Mother Teresa, who was hospitalised after breaking three ribs in a fall here last week, is improving slowly but will remain in clinic for at least another week, her doctor said. "Mother Teresa remains at risk because of her age and cardiac problems," said the physician, Vincenzo Bilotto. He said the 82-year-old nun "is still suffering greatly but she would like to leave hospital to resume her activities," adding that he would try to keep Mother Teresa at his clinic "for at least another week." Mother Teresa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her work with the poor in Calcutta through the Missionaries of Charity, hurt herself in a fall Thursday at the local offices of her order.

Court increases jail sentence for Hoxha's widow

TIRANA (R) — Albania's appeal court has increased the jail term for Stalinal leader Enver Hoxha's widow to 11 years after finding her guilty on further charges of siphoning off state cash for her personal benefit. Nexhmije Hoxha was found guilty of misappropriating 550,000 leks (around \$55,000 at the time) of public funds and had her sentence raised by two years. She had been sentenced to nine years in January for embezzling 32,000 leks (\$3,000). "We take into consideration the fact that the misappropriated value is greater than that accepted from the district court," Judge Nikoleta Kiti said. Prosecutor Koco Themeli had called for Mrs. Hoxha's sentence to be raised to 12 years. Mrs. Hoxha, Albania's most powerful woman even after her husband's death in 1985, failed to turn up at the appeal hearing. She said in a letter to the court that she had already answered the charges against her. "There is no need for me to come here and answer the charges against me because I have responded to them in the investigation process and in the first trial," the letter said. Mrs. Hoxha was represented in court by her lawyer Dhimitër Beshiri, who was flanked by her son Sokol.